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Dear Mrs Heald

Ofsted 2008-09 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 March 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the key areas of citizenship with some aspects that are good.
- Through the pupil council and in Philosophy for Children and other lessons, pupils experience democratic processes, develop good discussion and debating skills, active listening and turn-taking; although, they have not learned about wider local and national democratic institutions.
- The pupils' voice is strong as manifested in the active pupil council, through pupil evaluations of lessons and by voting in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons; for example, deciding which endangered animal to sponsor.

- Pupils' oral skills are better than their writing skills. They participate very well in debates, demonstrating a level of maturity beyond their years. However, they have few examples of sustained pieces of writing which reflect their levels of understanding.
- Pupils are developing their knowledge of human rights through study of the American civil rights movement and the history of apartheid in South Africa. They understand aspects of diversity through work on Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, including visits to a Sikh Temple and a Mosque. They show interest and respect for other faiths and cultures and have a good sense of right and wrong. This is shown in their behaviour towards their teachers and each other, as well as their keen interest in charity fund-raising.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a satisfactory understanding of the significance of the media in terms of information, bias and persuasion. In science they have learned about global warming and pollution and the pupil council has initiated a litter picking scheme.
- Pupils have some opportunity to research topical issues using information and communication technology (ICT) but this is limited due to a lack of resources.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and expertise. They use ICT well in lessons, although opportunities for pupils to use computers to research topical issues are limited at present.
- Teachers use a range of approaches including whole class discussion, pair and group work, visits and reflective writing. Pupils enjoy the lessons and engage very well with the teaching. Teachers use questioning very effectively to develop pupils' thinking and subject vocabulary.
- Work is generally well marked. Assessment in citizenship is based largely on pupils' oral contributions; the school has rightly identified assessment as an area for development.
- Lessons are well planned to meet the need of a wide range of abilities. Teaching assistants are well deployed to assist low and high ability learners in particular.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The programme integrates aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding. As such, there are good opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion, debate and decision-making in the school. However, there is less attention given to knowledge than to other aspects.
- The curriculum is beginning to address identity and diversity, including a 'Who do we think we are?' week. The school's application to the Global and Anti-Racist Perspectives project is accelerating this area of their work.

- There is some scope for pupils to revisit topics across key stages, although there is a far greater emphasis on citizenship in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 1 to 4, where the emphasis is on PSHE.
- There are some citizenship links with a local secondary school but these are at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- The school's vision for citizenship is well represented in policy and development planning and in the wider school ethos; it accords well with National Curriculum guidance and the Every Child Matters agenda.
- Sufficient resources have been provided for citizenship in terms of time, staff responsibility and material resources; and these are expected to improve when the school gains a library and an ICT suite as part of the new build.
- The subject leader has not had specific training in citizenship but attends coordinators' meetings and has a background in global education.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not specific to citizenship. However, the school has a realistic understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. The subject leader is aware that their strengths lie in teaching and learning and that there are areas for development in the curriculum, resources, and in engagement with parents and the local community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the curriculum is designed to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship issues as well as develop their skills and participation
- improving writing in citizenship
- developing strategies for assessing pupils' progress in citizenship
- improving links with parents and the community.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector