

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



28 October 2009

Ms S Blakeway  
Headteacher  
Hiltingbury Junior School  
Hiltingbury Road  
Chandler's Ford  
Eastleigh  
SO53 5NP

Dear Ms Blakeway

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Geography 2009/10

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 20 October 2009, to look at work in geography.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit focused on how effectively geography teaching and the curriculum promote community cohesion.

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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of data; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of one assembly and four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is outstanding.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is outstanding.

- The majority of pupils are working well above national standards in geography reflecting outstanding progress overall. The greater majority of pupils in the school make at least good progress in their lessons.

- The pupils get regular exposure to geography which enables them to progressively develop and consolidate their skills and knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- Geographical skills are particularly well developed through a very comprehensive fieldwork programme and through the frequent use of a variety of maps, aerial photographs and other geographical resources.
- Geographical learning is reinforced on a regular basis through other subjects, notably English but also through focused days, where geography provides a rich context for pupils to express their opinions on real issues and improve their writing across a variety of genres.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of places around the world. They are able to talk with confidence about topical issues linked to sustainable tourism in St Lucia, or the inequalities of child exploitation in India. They are articulate and are able to back up their opinions with clear and accurate evidence.
- Learning is outstanding because pupils are very familiar with their own locality and are able to make connections between their lives and those of people living in contrasting localities.

#### Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching is outstanding.

- Although most teachers are not geographers, they have good subject knowledge through access to good resources and a comprehensive and detailed teaching programme. They also have very good generic teaching skills. As a result, they have the confidence to deliver good quality lessons in the subject
- Teachers engage pupils in a range of practical ways whether this is through use of the outdoor classroom to bring geography learning to life or through a range of collaborative approaches in the classroom.
- There is also a strong emphasis in lessons on enquiry and discovery which adds to pupils' enjoyment and engagement with the subject.
- Pupils' views on how lessons can be improved are sought and acted on. As a result, the school is actively engaged in identifying how resources can be used even more effectively to stretch pupils in their learning in geography.
- Very effective use is made of information and communication technology to engage and interact with pupils. Topical and real issues are explored and the internet is used wisely as an inspirational resource. The use of geographical information systems (GIS) is an area which is less well-developed.

- A clear and workable framework for assessing pupils' progress in geography is established and is being refined to enable teachers to be even more secure in their understanding of pupil attainment.
- Teaching assistants and additional staff are used effectively as partners in the teaching process, not only to support learning but to engage actively with a wide range of pupils. They are well briefed; are aware of what is expected; and encouraged to work independently if that that is in the best interests of the pupils they are working with.

### Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is outstanding.

- There is a clear scheme of work which provides a very good framework for teachers to follow. It supports teaching extremely well. There is clear progression through the planned units of work which enables pupils to develop and consolidate geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers are encouraged to experiment and improve what is already in place and these programmes are continually evolving, are topical, relevant and meet the needs of pupils' extremely well.
- Fieldwork permeates each unit of work. Pupils enjoy these regular opportunities to learn outside the classroom whether it is a visit to Sparsholt College Farm, opportunities to collect data in Hartford stream or contrast their own area to settlements on the Isle of Wight during their residential experience.
- There is also a strong focus on the immediate locality of the school and pupils have a rich understanding of both the physical and human diversity evident in their own locality in Hampshire. Pupils know and understand their area well.
- Geography is not just treated as a discrete subject but is also seen as a cross-curricular subject which can provide a rich learning context in many other areas. Pupils recognise this and have their geographical learning continually reinforced.
- Very effective use is made of project weeks to enable pupils to experience a wide range of subjects and make connections between subjects which stimulates and deepens their learning about topics such as energy for example. These are also useful in developing pupils' ability to work in teams, research independently and respect each others opinions.

### Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is outstanding.

- Although there have been several coordinators of the subject in recent years, each has built on the foundations provided by predecessors. Each has also left a legacy that has continued to develop the subject embedding fieldwork or sustainability into the geography curriculum. There is very good succession planning which enables the subject to continue to flourish.
- Geography provision is well monitored and the coordinators have identified clear areas for improvement each year which have been developed to improve geographical outcomes for pupils. The subject has not been allowed to stand still.
- There has been very effective engagement through individual and collective professional development which has enabled the teachers to be aware of, and keep abreast of, what's happening in geography. Effective management of the subject has encouraged teachers to have real enthusiasm to teach geography.
- Developing the subject is not the prerogative of the coordinator. There is good teamwork and individuals are encouraged to become involved in developing their subject expertise and disseminating effective practice.
- Very good use is made of the effective support offered by initiatives offered through the subject associations such as the 'Geography Champions' scheme as well as more local support provided by the local authority.

### Subject issues

The effectiveness of geography teaching and the curriculum in promoting community cohesion is outstanding.

- Community cohesion is clearly identifiable in the planning for geography.
- As a result of a well-balanced and integrated learning programme, pupils are aware of the nature of geography and understand that it is about what is happening around them on a variety of scales from local to global. They are aware that they are part of a local community but also a global society.
- Pupils are determined to act sensibly as citizens of the world. This is reflected in their many positive actions ranging from raising money for charities but also, for example, through opportunities to express their concerns about issues linked to poverty, exploitation, or global warming. They are aware that they need to act as responsible citizens in an ever-changing and demanding world.

- In classrooms, there is a common sense of purpose among pupils and a real willingness to work with each other. Pupils show respect for each other and to visitors.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of life in other countries enabling them to challenge stereotypes and have a balanced view of the world.
- Links with schools in Spain, Italy and Poland have helped develop the European dimension well and enabled pupils to work collaboratively and exchange and share views with their European partners on issues such as energy. This has deepened pupils understanding of their role as part of a wider European community.

#### Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing portfolios of moderated work to make assessment more secure
- integrating the use of GIS into the learning programmes and units of work to further develop pupils' analytical skills
- continuing to provide an even wider range of differentiated resources to challenge pupils further and promote even better learning.

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 the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow  
Her Majesty's Inspector