

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



30 March 2010

Mr D Lawrence
Headteacher
Kingsland CofE(C) Primary School
Werrington Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST2 9AS

Dear Mr Lawrence

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: history

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 16 March 2010 to look at work in history.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the contribution of history to community cohesion and the development of independent learning in history.

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.

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

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

Achievement in history

Achievement in history is good.

- All pupils make good progress against low starting points and, as a result, standards of attainment are broadly average and rising.
- Pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of important historical events and people. For example, Year 2 pupils are able to talk confidently and knowledgeably about the lives of historical figures, such as Florence Nightingale.
- Chronological understanding is also developing well. Older pupils are able to accurately put events in chronological order and younger pupils have a good understanding of concepts relating to the passage of time. However,

pupils' understanding of historical interpretations and their skills of assessing the utility of historical evidence are less secure.

- History makes a very significant contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, especially with regard to producing accurate historical writing for different audiences and purposes.
- History makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy studying history and behave well in lessons. They particularly like the opportunities provided by the new Creative Curriculum, especially when using the latest digital technology.

Quality of teaching in history

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Teachers and pupils share a great enthusiasm for the subject. Learning activities are planned well to meet the needs of all pupils through a variety of challenging and engaging tasks. Good support is given to pupils who need extra help to develop their literacy skills.
- Classroom displays are designed well to enable pupils to get a sense of period and to celebrate their finished work. For example, Year 1 demonstrated a good understanding of how toys have changed over time by transforming an area of their classroom into a museum for toys.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils should learn by the end of the lesson. However, learning goals are not always sufficiently focused on assessing historical skills and providing pupils with sharp pointers for making better progress.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Egyptian farming was significantly enhanced by the use of digital imagery and green screen technology.

Quality of the curriculum in history

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The school is implementing a new, team-based approach to curriculum planning which focuses more on developing pupils' creativity by establishing closer links between subjects. Consequently, pupils are developing their historical knowledge well and making increasingly sophisticated connections between themes and subjects.
- The school has forged excellent partnerships with external providers to develop history teaching creatively through a digital medium.
- The good range of visits and visitors makes a significant contribution to the interest and engagement of pupils. Much useful work is undertaken in partnership with local museums.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in history

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of history is good.

- Effective self-evaluation means that understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development is good. The deputy headteacher and the curriculum team work well together and there is a clear pattern of monitoring to secure improvement in the subject.
- Teachers assess pupils' achievement in history regularly as part of an electronic tracking system. This enables the school to have an accurate view of the overall progress made by pupils in each year group.
- Teachers are supported well by detailed planning and good teaching resources and ideas. However, the curriculum team is aware that expected levels of progression in pupils' understanding of key historical concepts and skills are not yet set out clearly enough in school documentation. As a result, the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress in the development of these wider historical skills across the school are limited.

Subject issue: the contribution of history to community cohesion

The contribution of history to community cohesion is good.

- History makes a good contribution to enhancing pupils' awareness and understanding of their local community. This is achieved through incorporating local history into curriculum topics and by visits to local places of historical interest and local museums.
- Pupils are inquisitive about, and have a good knowledge and understanding of, other European and global cultures such as Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. However, their understanding of how the United Kingdom has developed into a culturally and ethnically diverse society is underdeveloped.

Subject issue: the development of independent learning in history

The development of independent learning in history is good.

- The curriculum team has a clear understanding and commitment to developing pupils' independent learning skills set within a whole-school focus of developing learners to be 'critical thinkers'. All of the lessons observed had good elements of independent learning and there was an appropriate balance of group and individual activities.
- The vast majority of pupils are inquisitive and enjoy planning their own learning. They have regular opportunities to undertake research and present findings in class and to the local community via assemblies.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that pupils' wider historical skills are more coherently and consistently developed across the school by:

- devising an explicit and well-defined approach to planning for progression in pupils' understanding of these skills
 - ensuring that pupils' progress in the development of historical skills are monitored and evaluated more rigorously
- ensuring that the subject contributes more to pupils' preparation for life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

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

As I explained previously, 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

Karl Sampson
Her Majesty's Inspector