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Mrs V Hutchinson  
Headteacher  
Marcham Church of England (VC) Primary School  
Morland Road  
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Dear Mrs Hutchinson

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: history**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 12 July 2010 to look at work 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 without their consent.

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

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is good.

- Attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils of all abilities make good progress in developing their historical understanding and skills. Pupils undertake a good range of research activities both inside and outside the classroom, such as finding out how the Romans lived and how their customs were different from those in modern Britain.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully and make well-reasoned answers. In Years 2 and 3, pupils were encouraged to ask good questions about the Romans and these were put in a 'magic box' to be revisited later so that well-informed answers could be given to them after further study.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils commented that they find history is 'good for finding out how things have changed from the past to modern days'. They say they like finding out about 'facts and details' relating to individuals, such as Grace Darling. Pupils like learning about the

local community and its links with the Romans. However, opportunities to develop extended writing skills are limited.

- Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils work well both on their own and in small groups collaborating on projects, such as that for the Egyptians.
- Pupils are encouraged to present their findings clearly to the rest of their group and then the whole class, which they accomplish well.
- Pupils have accurate knowledge about the topics they study, although when asked, some pupils could not place dates in the correct century. They have a good understanding of the importance of basing their ideas on evidence.

### **Quality of teaching in history**

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Teachers and learning assistants develop good relationships with pupils. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that all pupils are actively engaged in the tasks. They are based on clear learning objectives which are shared carefully with the pupils.
- Marking in pupils' books is good and indicates how they can improve their work. Provision is made for more able history pupils on special 'Gifted & Talented' days, but some activities in classes are not challenging enough for them.
- Teachers track the progress of individual pupils in their development of general skills well, but have yet to monitor sufficiently clearly how well pupils' specific historical skills are developing.

### **Quality of the curriculum in history**

The quality of the history curriculum is good.

- The school is developing a good creative curriculum where history falls within a general humanities suite of topics. There is a rolling programme of history topics through the year. The curriculum successfully retains an appropriate focus on history within the wider thematic curriculum.
- The emphasis on developing pupils' history skills is good. Pupils know how to analyse and interrogate sources and artefacts and are developing their understanding of key history concepts, such as change over time, well. Their understanding of interpretations in history is less secure.
- The school organises a varied range of visits to places of historical interest locally. Pupils enjoy going to museums in Swindon and Woodstock.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in history**

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

- The subject is part of a humanities programme and is led and managed by a humanities team rather than one person. They are in the process of

ensuring that planning is good and understood by all those teaching humanities' subjects.

- Although the school has a satisfactory grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of history, self-evaluation is not rigorous enough.
- Classroom monitoring of history teaching is good and is supported by regular work reviews and questionnaires for pupils.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- increasing the level of challenge for more able pupils in history
- making better provision for pupils to improve their extended writing skills
- ensuring that self-evaluation in history is more rigorous.

I hope that 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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

**Peter Limm**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**