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Mrs A Simpson  
Headteacher  
Tewin Cowper CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Simpson

### **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 26 January 2011 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 you, staff, pupils and a governor; a scrutiny of relevant documentation; an analysis of pupils' work; and the observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is good.

- Pupils experience good learning which enables them to make good progress. They are gaining good knowledge and understanding about the Vikings and Ancient Egypt, for example. Their attainment is above the average for their ages.
- Pupils work with a good range of historical sources and many are able to think critically about the past. One Year 4 pupil, for instance, understood why children in Britain had to be evacuated from cities during the Second World War but not the First.
- Pupils' enquiry skills are being developed well. They are able to evaluate sources competently and can make good judgements about those which are reliable and those which are not.
- Pupils can communicate ideas confidently. They are developing a sense of curiosity about the past and many are keen to broaden their historical

knowledge and understanding. One pupil in Year 6, for example, wanted to know why they were not studying the British Empire.

- Pupils undertake good-quality research, for example about their relatives or local families that were involved during the First and Second World Wars. They are also keen to research historical topics using the internet.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are invariably well behaved and polite. Their attitudes to learning are excellent and they can maintain their concentration on the work set. They work well together in pairs and in small groups.

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

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Lessons provide a good learning environment and pupils respond well to the routines and expectations of the adults.
- Activities are planned well and meet the needs of the wide range of pupils. As a result, the pupils are engaged in their work and some are highly motivated.
- The organisation of group activities is good. Additional adult support is used efficiently to enable the better progress of pupils who require this help.
- The use of new technology is good, both in the teaching and learning. Teachers use the video projector effectively and pupils are good users of computers.
- Time is used effectively. The pace to the learning is brisk and enables pupils to make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Pupils' skills in independent learning are developed well. They use books, other written texts and information and communication technology (ICT) with purpose. They are competent and confident learners.
- Teachers offer good oral feedback to pupils in lessons. This is often linked to incisive questioning which extends the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and some written comments are made. However, these comments do not always indicate how pupils can improve their work.

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

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and it meets requirements. Good cross-curricular links develop pupils' skills in literacy and ICT well.
- The curriculum is being strengthened by the adoption of a whole-school approach which places more emphasis on developing enquiry-based skills.
- The curriculum is effective and gives pupils the opportunities to develop a good range of historical skills. They evaluate a good range of historical

sources and can make well-considered judgements about the value of these.

- The curriculum is enriched by in-depth studies on particular aspects, for example the organisation of whole-school Victorian Days, or about coronations and Royal Weddings.
- The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of historical interest. These include visits to the Mill Green Museum, Hatfield House, Celtic Harmony Camp, Stondon Transport Museum and Wimpole Hall. In addition, visitors come to talk to the pupils about aspects of local and national history.

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

Leadership and management in history are good with outstanding features.

- The subject leader has created a common sense of purpose among the staff and governors who are keen to develop the subject even further.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on a thorough analysis of what pupils need to enhance their progress.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures are thorough. In addition to routine evaluation by the subject leader, history is part of an evaluation cycle which involves lesson observations, an in-depth scrutiny of work and talking to pupils. This process also involves the link governor and support staff.
- The subject is experiencing greater innovation and success through the school. Good collaboration among teachers and support staff is based on joint planning and the sharing of good practice.
- The relatively new curriculum approach in history is leading to the better development of pupils' skills. However, formal procedures to evaluate the long-term impact of this approach have not yet been fully developed.

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

- ensuring that written feedback to pupils routinely indicates how they can improve their work
- ensuring that the impact of the relatively new approach to the curriculum is more formally evaluated.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Champak Chauhan**  
**Additional Inspector**