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Ms N Lone and Ms I Leeves  
Cranmer Primary School  
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Dear Ms Lone and Ms Leeves

### **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 25 November 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; wall displays analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons. I also attended your pupils' Tudor assembly in the main hall.

The overall effectiveness of history is outstanding.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is outstanding.

- While there is variation between pupils, overall, they achieve above average standards and their progress is outstanding. There are many examples that could be cited of this excellent progress. However, particularly interesting is the progress of pupils with English as a second language. The school has a large number of such pupils, well above the national average. In one example, a Year 2 pupil who arrived at the school with no English at all, could by Year 4, read, write, draw and talk about history in a way that showed very sound knowledge, understanding and an ability to interpret historical evidence.
- Pupils' personal development is also outstanding. In a Year 6 class studying the Second World War, though initially a little reluctant to say

what they thought, pupils soon began to express views about the war. They responded well to prompts about right and wrong, democracy and dictatorship. In Reception, pupils were beginning successfully to sort out time by locating themselves in relation to parents and grandparents.

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

The quality of teaching in history is outstanding.

- Teachers are very committed to the subject and are keen to share their enthusiasm with pupils. As a result, the content of lessons is rich and delivery is well paced, challenging and well-matched to the needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed very well to support pupils, gently nudging them forward. The care that teachers have for pupils was confirmed by pupils when they were interviewed. Pupils also appreciated the many different activities they are given to do.
- There is a thorough assessment system which is used to inform teaching and to provide effective reporting to parents. There are helpful comments made by teachers at the end of pupils' written work. Pupils are able to say how well they are doing in history.
- There was evidence of outstanding teaching in classes, in wall displays and in pupils' work. One example was a Year 2 class which had been on a visit to a local country house. The teacher used the interactive whiteboard, Dr Who music, and clothes from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to give pupils the opportunity to question their fellow pupils who role-played children from the past and the present. The history was excellent because of the focus on interpreting evidence and the lesson was fast but suitably paced for the pupils. Above all, it was fun.

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

The quality of the curriculum in history is outstanding.

- The curriculum is thoughtful, innovative but cautious. At its core are topics such as the Victorians and the Ancient Greeks the content of which is accurate, motivating and encourages exciting teaching. But what is interesting is the way in which staff have begun to move the curriculum on by developing new topics based on relevance to pupils and by ensuring that history contributes to learning essential skills, particularly literacy. They have very successfully blended history with other subjects while still preserving its subject integrity.
- So, for example, in preparation for a two-week 'International Arts and Literacy' curriculum focus, staff looked carefully at the ethnic mix of the school to select the stories of famous people who were relevant to the identified groups; for example, Gandhi, Usain Bolt, Mary Seacole, and Benazir Bhutto. Although the focus of the week was literacy, it drew very heavily on history. The historical knowledge and understanding of pupils at the end of the week reflected in written work, discussions and in displays in the school hall were impressive.

- Chronology is very clear within topics but, because of the way the curriculum is organised, it does not obviously offer pupils an overall chronology covering all the topics studied. It currently has a clear rationale but, nevertheless, given the school's insistence on a curriculum relevant to pupils, there is scope to ask questions such as 'Why are we studying the Tudors and what of the Tudors should we study?'
- Resources are used very well as are visits to local historical sites. Year 2 visit the local war memorial as part of their Remembrance Day work; Year 6 visit the Imperial War Museum; Year 4 to go to Hampton Court and Year 5 to the Museum of London as part of their Victorian topic.

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

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in history is outstanding.

- The subject coordinator leads and manages well; she has engaged all staff to become part of the management team taking initiatives to improve the subject.
- The coordinator has a very good view of the strengths and issues for development in relation to history. Self-evaluation is excellent, supported by the effective assessment of pupils' performance in the subject.

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

- clarifying the rationale for the curriculum to support even more the school's interest in creating a curriculum which is historically and currently relevant to its pupils
- ensuring that pupils have a clear chronological overview covering all the topics studied.

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

**Paul Armitage**  
**Additional Inspector**