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Mrs C Taylor  
Headteacher  
Mayfield Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Taylor

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 November 2010 to look at work in geography.

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; analysis of pupils' work and enrichment activities; and observation of parts of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is good.

- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach broadly average standards of attainment. On entry to the school they have limited knowledge and understanding of the world but they make good progress, particularly in understanding sustainable development.
- Pupils are able to use data and information sources well to organise, research and present geographical information because they have well-developed skills in using information and communication technology (ICT).
- Generally, pupils' understanding increases in depth and rigour as they move through the school. They have good knowledge of their local area and countries that they have studied, but are less aware of differences within the United Kingdom or of the characteristics of other developed countries.

- Pupils are able to work independently and take the initiative in their work because they have frequent opportunities to do this to solve real life problems and express their own opinions.
- Pupils have strong fieldwork skills which progress from observation to recording and on to interpretation because they are regularly able to develop these skills in a range of situations.
- Pupils' personal development is good because they are provided with good opportunities to build up important life skills which promote their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and help them to make a positive contribution in their own community and abroad.

### **Quality of teaching of geography**

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Teachers use a good range of strategies, which includes drama, multi-media resources and maps, to promote good learning.
- Teachers understand the importance of using the outdoor environment and experiences that are highly relevant to pupils to help them engage with learning and understand its relevance.
- Teachers listen to, observe and question individual pupils well during lessons, to reshape explanations to improve learning and check pupils' understanding.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in geography are not fully used to match future learning tasks and levels of challenge to the needs of different groups of pupils, or help them understand how well they are doing and how to improve further.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Teachers manage their classrooms well but do not always support pupils with subject-specific vocabulary and precise learning objectives. Constructive behaviour management strategies promote good behaviour.

### **Quality of the curriculum in geography**

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- Community cohesion at local and international levels is well planned into the curriculum and helps pupils to understand the issues and identify opportunities within their local area. Pupils know how they can make a positive contribution and are aware of the difficulties that face countries that experience natural disasters.
- Strong links exist with a range of partner agencies which provide meaningful enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement. The school is a Forest School and holds the silver Eco award.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of pertinent fieldwork activities in the school grounds, the local area and further afield to increase pupils' awareness of a range of different locations.

- Recent adaptations to the curriculum are increasing its relevance, the way that it builds on pupils' own experiences, and pupils' enjoyment. However, the curriculum is not yet well balanced; some areas of geography are over-emphasised at the expense of others.
- The curriculum helps pupils to understand the impact of their own actions both locally and globally. The concepts of space, scale and interdependence are less well-developed because there is less emphasis on their progression in teachers' planning.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- Leaders ensure that pupils progress well in geography. They have identified many appropriate and relevant aspects for improvement such as continued curriculum review and the enhanced use of assessment to inform planning. They are aware of the need to monitor and evaluate geography more rigorously. There is good capacity for improvement.
- The monitoring of the effectiveness of geography draws appropriately on the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and the views of both teachers and pupils to inform the school about the strengths and weaknesses in terms of provision and resources. There is no similar emphasis on evaluating the progress in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The improvement plan has pertinent priorities but does not make robust use of subject-specific success criteria rooted in further improving pupils' outcomes.
- Leadership is provided through a team of staff. This promotes effective teamwork, supports professional development and enhances the sharing of best practice.
- Leaders have ensured that the use of partnerships and resources promote effective geography. Pupils have access to excellent resources in the school and its grounds and good ICT. The quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environments is excellent; pupils enjoy these environments and frequently contribute to them.
- Leaders give strong emphasis to health and safety and have ensured that robust risk assessments are in place for fieldwork activities.

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

- checking that the curriculum is broad and well balanced and that it ensures the progressive development of skills and concepts
- developing the rigour of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning
- developing the use of assessment in the classroom and to support learning and inform subject evaluations.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop geography 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

**Sonya Williamson**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**