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Mrs J Davies  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Davies

### **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 6 October 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 observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is outstanding.

### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is outstanding.

- The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 is above average. They are able to describe and compare geographical features, both human and physical, in a range of locations. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the impact that people have on the environment and the importance of sustainability. They use a range of sources effectively when completing research projects.
- Pupils make outstanding progress based on their starting points. High-quality learning was demonstrated across a range of lessons. For example, in Year 6, pupils described and explained in detail how to undertake a stream survey and the purpose of this. In Year 4, they demonstrated highly developed atlas and map skills and could explain how to find and

recognise countries on an outline map using an atlas. Year 1 pupils were able to identify key features on aerial photographs and maps at different scales, and make links between distance and types of transport used.

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In all lessons, they were enthusiastic about geography and this was reflected in their very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Good opportunities are provided, particularly through holiday projects, for pupils to develop skills of independent learning and they really appreciate the freedom this gives them to undertake their own research.

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

The quality of teaching in geography is outstanding.

- All staff have high expectations of pupils' learning in geography. Although not subject specialists, they display high levels of expertise in both subject knowledge and how to teach geography. Teachers pay good attention to developing pupils' understanding of the global dimension.
- Lessons are planned meticulously, with clear geographic subject criteria that are shared with pupils.
- A wide range of strategies is used successfully to engage pupils in the learning and there are good opportunities, especially in Years 5 and 6, for pupils to direct their own learning.
- Different pupil groupings are used effectively and help promote high-quality learning.
- Teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT), a range of maps and the outside environment is commonplace and helps bring the subject alive.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly, with detailed comments that identify strengths and areas for improvement. Pupils often respond in writing to the latter.
- National Curriculum levels have been re-written so that pupils can understand what they have to do to attain these. The older pupils fully understand the purpose of these and how teachers assess them.

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

The quality of the curriculum in geography is outstanding.

- Geography plays a significant role in the school's Rights, Respects and Responsibilities approach to the curriculum, as well as the broader agenda of developing community cohesion and the global dimension.
- The curriculum plan has a broad range of distinct geographical themes in each year and opportunities for cross-curricular work. A curriculum week that focuses on geography enhances this.
- The curriculum is well-matched to pupils' needs and ensures progression in their learning.

- Fieldwork is a strength of the curriculum, with a wide range of opportunities provided in each year group including residential experiences for the older pupils. Fieldwork skills are developed progressively across each year group.
- Key geographical concepts such as place, processes and environmental change are identified in the planning but it is not explicit how these are developed progressively across each key stage.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is outstanding.

- The geography coordinator provides outstanding leadership and has a high level of subject expertise that is shared effectively with staff. The coordinator is up-to-date with current developments in primary school geography and has established strong links with other schools and the local authority.
- Geography has a high profile in the school and there is a track record of improvement and innovation. All necessary documentation is in place and a clear action plan has targeted areas for improvement.
- Joint planning and regular scrutiny of pupils' work ensure that best practice is shared and support is provided where needed. This is high-quality professional development, which inspires staff to be confident in their teaching.
- Geography is well resourced through ICT, textbook, atlases, maps and artefacts. Very effective use is made of parents to support specific aspects of the curriculum, especially the global dimension.

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

- developing pupils' understanding of the National Curriculum levels so that they are able to assess the quality of their work
- ensuring that the progressive development of key geographical concepts are planned clearly across each key stage.

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

**Paul Dowgill**  
**Additional Inspector**