

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



11 March 2011

Mrs M Hughes
Headteacher
St Stephen's Church of England Primary School
Manchester Road
Tyldesley
Lancashire
M29 7BT

Dear Mrs Hughes

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 28 February 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

Achievement in history

Achievement in history is good.

- Pupils' skills on entry to the Reception Class in literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world vary from year to year but are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress across the school and attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Pupils acquire historical skills well. They begin to develop chronological skills in Reception through the use of timelines which outline the ages of a range of toys. By the time they are in Year 3, they identify accurately the decades represented by a variety of artefacts and give convincing reasons for their answers.
- Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the types of evidence used by historians and use primary evidence confidently when discussing life in Victorian times. Most are aware that the past can be interpreted in

different ways but their understanding of the nature of bias is underdeveloped.

- Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their lessons, value the opportunities they have to express their own opinions and behave well. They are delighted to show their work to visitors and have a high regard for the adults who work with them.

Quality of teaching in history

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Lessons are prepared well and teachers place emphasis on planning activities that are relevant to the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. As a result, challenge is realistic and pupils of all levels of ability are able to make good progress in their studies.
- In all lessons observed, pupils collaborated well in pairs and in groups, both challenging and supporting each other in their search for the truth, about governmental decisions leading to the outbreak of the Second World War, for example. The school recognises that sometimes there is too much teacher explanation at the start of lessons and that pupils do not begin their individual or group work early enough.
- Teachers use new technology effectively as a teaching and learning tool. For example, pupils were fascinated by the opportunities they had to use the 'talking postcard' when they were completing their riddles on famous people.
- Assessment is good. Teachers gauge how securely pupils are acquiring historical skills and use the 'I can' sheets effectively to ensure that pupils and their families are fully aware of the skills to be covered in each topic and also of the progress being made. Support staff, including higher level teaching assistants, play an active part in the classroom and enable pupils of all abilities to take full advantage of what lessons have to offer.

Quality of the curriculum in history

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well. It places appropriate emphasis on the importance of history in the promotion of community cohesion and in the understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.
- From the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good focus on fostering pupils' skills of enquiry and investigation. Pupils' skills of analysis and evaluation are reinforced well throughout the rest of the school. They are enabled to identify the links between history and other subjects and they value the opportunities that they have to use pieces of art as historical sources.
- The programme of enrichment activities includes themed days and visitors, but the programme is limited as pupils say they would like more historical

trips, particularly since they enjoyed their visits to Tudor and Victorian properties so much.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in history

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

- Key stage leaders monitor teaching, progress and attainment in history closely. They also take full account of pupils' views on its content and delivery. They support their colleagues effectively in teaching the subject.
- After detailed evaluations of pupils' progress at the end of each topic, key stage leaders also complete an annual report on performance in history. They have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development in the subject. They are aware, for example, that enrichment needs to be strengthened further and that sometimes there is too much teacher direction at the beginning of lessons. Nonetheless, they are well informed about current developments, provide good strategic direction for the subject and maintain its high profile in school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further strengthening the enrichment programme in history, including extra-curricular activities
- building upon pupils' good acquisition of historical skills by placing more focus on their understanding of the nature of bias
- reducing teacher explanation at the start of lessons so that pupils can begin their independent and collaborative assignments earlier.

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

Jim Kidd
Additional Inspector