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Mrs N Vaughan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Vaughan

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: history

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 26 May 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 and pupils; a scrutiny of relevant documentation; an analysis of pupils' work; and the observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

Achievement in history

Achievement in history is good.

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress and their attainment is above average. They have good understanding of a range of historical periods because they are able to study them in some detail. Pupils' chronological understanding is developed well for their ages.
- They use historical evidence competently and they are able to ask relevant questions about artefacts and photographs from the past. They ask, 'how?, what?, why?, when?, who? and where?' about particular evidence and, as a result, are able to think, reflect and be critical. Their skills of interpretation are good and they can make reasonable deductions about different types of historical evidence.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Many undertake in-depth research through the use of information and communication technology. Pupils can

communicate their ideas confidently through extended writing and they write well for different audiences and purposes.

- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are curious about the past and have excellent attitudes and behaviour. Pupils work well together in pairs and in small groups. They respond well to the adults and sustain their concentration on the tasks set.

Quality of teaching in history

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Teachers' planning is detailed and based on the development of historical enquiry. Success criteria for pupils are routinely identified, for example, 'I can talk about how the railways impacted on Victorian life' for Year 5 pupils.
- Teachers create a good learning environment where routines and expectations are known, understood and followed by all. This leads to a harmonious working environment based on good relationships.
- Teachers organise learning activities well. They introduce the sessions well and encourage pupils to ask questions about particular historical evidence, for example old photographs.
- Pupils enjoy asking questions about the past and respond well to the teaching. Many are keen to hypothesise about artefacts or events, and they are not afraid of disagreeing with their peers.
- Teachers' brisk and incisive questioning extends pupils' historical understanding. Pupils in Year 5, for example, can ask pertinent questions about everyday life in Ancient Greece after examining photographs of different artefacts.
- Teachers use time well and activities are adapted so that the pace of learning is maintained or enhanced. Good oral feedback and encouragement are given to the pupils.
- Pupils' work is routinely marked and appropriate feedback is offered.

Quality of the curriculum in history

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets requirements. Pupils benefit from well-designed opportunities to learn about the past, including local, national and world events. This is combined with good opportunities to undertake in-depth research work, for example on the Romans in Britain.
- History plays an important part in the life of the school. Good-quality pupils' work is on display and aspects of the history being studied are used for whole-school events, for example performing plays about Henry VIII in assemblies.
- Pupils enjoy the good range of enrichment activities offered. Good links exist with the nearby Holdenby House and Kettering Museum, both of

which pupils regularly visit. Pupils have also visited Duxford Museum as part of their work on Remembrance Day.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in history

The effectiveness of leadership and management in history is good.

- History is led well by the subject leader. Appropriate advice and guidance are provided to the staff.
- Staff value the subject and use it as a lynchpin for integrated approaches with other subjects, such as English, art and geography. Good practice is shared within the school.
- The subject leader monitors and evaluates the subject through a scrutiny of teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' work every term. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and appropriate action taken where necessary. However, the subject leader does not routinely observe lessons and does not formally seek pupils' views about their experiences of the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the subject leader routinely observes lessons and regularly gathers pupils' views on learning the subject.

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