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Mr P Wood  
Headteacher  
Knighton Fields Primary School and Community Centre  
Knighton Fields Road West  
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Dear Mr Wood

### **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 9 June 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 satisfactory.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is satisfactory.

- From relatively low starting points, pupils make sound progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding. They know relevant facts about Henry VIII, for example, and some have good understanding of the Roman invasion of Britain. Their attainment, however, remains low.
- Pupils enjoy learning history and they work competently with historical evidence. They are able to reflect and debate well and the higher attainers, in particular, have good recall of work already covered.
- Pupils are able to ask historical questions about the evidence presented to them. However, their skills of interpreting evidence, making deductions and understanding how and why people interpret the past in different ways is underdeveloped.

- Pupils' progress in history is hindered because they have relatively weak skills in reading and writing. Pupils of all abilities struggle with the use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They are curious about the past and maintain their concentration on the work set. Relationships are good. They work well in pairs and in small groups.

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

The quality of teaching in history is satisfactory.

- Lessons are characterised by a pleasant learning environment where pupils work well with the adults. Activities are well organised and they enable pupils to ask relevant questions about historical sources, for example photographs.
- The incisive questioning by teachers extends pupils' knowledge and understanding well. One Year 3 pupil, for example, asked whether King George VI was a Jamaican king since his portrait appeared on a Jamaican stamp from the 1940s.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers use digital projectors and whiteboards well, and pupils' use of ICT is regular.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and targets for improvement are identified.
- Some of the teachers' planning, however, does not always meet the needs of various groups of pupils. In addition, it does not routinely identify specific history targets for different pupils and, therefore, their progress cannot be more thoroughly evaluated.

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

The quality of the curriculum in history is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is broad and meets requirements. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to learn about important aspects of local, national and world history.
- Pupils study different aspects of the past and combine these with in-depth studies, for example about life in Victorian times, or immigration into the United Kingdom after the Second World War.
- The organisation of the curriculum provides pupils with a growing understanding of key historical concepts. These are strengthened as they get older.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. They regularly visit local museums, for example in Leicester and Market Harborough. This is complemented by residential activities in London, Derbyshire and Leicestershire where aspects of history are covered in depth.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in history is satisfactory.

- The two subject leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the regular observation of lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work and the monitoring of teachers' planning. Appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified.
- Outcomes in the subject, however, have not yet improved quickly enough. The school anticipates that the whole-school curricular changes due to be implemented from September 2011 will improve these.

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

- broadening the range of historical evidence that pupils work with so that their skills of interpretation, making deductions, and being more critical about the past are enhanced
- strengthening pupils' literacy skills in history so that they write more extensively, for different audiences and purposes, and that they routinely use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation
- ensuring that teachers identify more appropriate activities and more explicit history targets for different groups of pupils to enable pupils to make faster progress in the subject and to ensure that their progress towards these is regularly evaluated.

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**