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22 June 2011

Mr P Worley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Worley

### **Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: geography**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 13 June 2011 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 three lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and understanding of the world that are low in comparison with most four-year-old pupils. Over the past two years, children's progress has accelerated because of: consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching; the development of the outdoor learning environment; detailed assessment that informs teaching; and better knowledge of the curriculum. Consequently, children will enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment in September.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has also improved. Good teaching coupled with an interesting and engaging curriculum has helped pupils make good progress.

- Currently, pupils' attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6, although this represents good progress from their starting points. Fewer attain at the higher levels because they are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work. In addition, pupils' skills in human and environmental geography are better developed than those in physical geography because they are presented with more opportunities to study these aspects.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their immediate locality through their studies of St Ann's and regular visits to the neighbourhood orchard. Their knowledge and understanding of locality develop well as they move through the school because pupils are able to compare and contrast their own area with other places such as Gunthorpe.
- Pupils have developed a good understanding of other countries through, for example, their links with a school in Nepal and their in-depth study of the Amazon Rainforest.
- A good emphasis is placed on developing geographical vocabulary as well as observational skills. Pupils are able to use globes and atlases effectively. They use a variety of maps well in classrooms or as part of their fieldwork studies to support their learning.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk enthusiastically about their work. All were engaged in meaningful and appropriate activities in the lessons observed. Pupils behave well and this makes a significant contribution to their learning, especially when working cooperatively in groups.

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

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Teachers motivate and engage pupils by planning and delivering interesting lessons. Good explanations combined with effective questioning ensure that lessons move at a good pace. Teachers have good geographical knowledge which ensures that pupils make good progress in all lessons.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils.
- A variety of assessment strategies is in place. In lessons, the use of 'mini-plenaries' helps pupils to understand how they are doing. Marking generally gives good guidance about what pupils need to do next to improve. However, this is not consistent between classes in the same year group or across the school.
- End-of-unit and end-of-year assessment is variable. In some cases, it is detailed and comprehensive, as in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is inconsistent in Key Stages 1 and 2 and is not always used by teachers to plan work that builds on pupils' prior learning.

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

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The curriculum is suitably broad and, in the main, sequentially builds on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. A thorough review of the curriculum has been undertaken and revised schemes of work are being introduced in September 2011. These new themes promise to be interesting and engaging for pupils.
- The curriculum has several strengths. Pupils have a wide range of fieldwork opportunities. Frequent use of the extensive school grounds coupled with visits to their locality and to places further afield, such as Attenborough, Wollaton Park, Skegness and London, enriches the curriculum and extends pupils' first-hand experience of the themes they are studying. Pupils speak very positively about these visits as well as their residential experiences.
- Through their Eco and International Schools work, and links with schools in Nepal and Spain, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of environmental issues and of other countries. Community cohesion is also developed well.
- Links with other subjects such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are well established. Speaking and listening opportunities are well used. The development of writing has been a whole-school priority. Pupils' work shows a variety of different writing styles that has been used by teachers.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- The subject leader has successfully driven the school's Eco schools and environmental work agenda. She has also fully participated in the revision to the curriculum which is to be introduced in September 2011.
- However, the role has been one of maintenance than development. This is because the school's amalgamation and focus on literacy and numeracy have been the main priorities. The subject policy was revised in September 2010. Resources have been managed effectively and are of adequate quality.
- Apart from the evaluation of planning and informal monitoring of work, the subject leader has had limited opportunities for systematic monitoring and evaluation.
- The subject leader has not used the resources and support available from subject associations to help keep her informed of new developments in the subject or take opportunities for professional development.

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

- implementing the newly revised scheme of work at the start of the new academic year
- devising and establishing a whole-school approach to assessment that is used consistently by all staff and enables them to ensure that pupils' skills are built on sequentially

- providing suitable challenge for higher attaining pupils
- providing the subject leader with regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate the provision, including the newly revised scheme of work.

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 Weston**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**