

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



30 June 2011

Ms S Warrington
Headteacher
Chace Community School
Churchbury Lane
Enfield
EN1 3HQ

Dear Ms Warrington

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 14 and 15 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of four lessons and an analysis of the lesson plan and the outcomes of a fifth lesson.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- The standard of students' work on entry is very varied and often well below average. Students have different geographical experiences as they come from 30 primary schools. There are 45 different languages spoken within the school and this offers opportunities for students to share experiences of different places around the world.
- Year 7 students enjoy their first project based on the Greenwich meridian and develop a good understanding of the different countries, cultures and climate along its length. Their study of volcanoes and earthquakes shows them how natural events in one place can impact on another.

- Local fieldwork also helps students to know and appreciate more about their immediate surroundings.
- Year 8 work builds well on these foundations and students develop a good understanding of fair trade and sustainable development. Fieldwork skills are enhanced through their visit to the site of the 2012 Olympic Games. Work on rivers and coastlines gives them added insight into physical processes. Their knowledge of economic and political geography improves well as they study North America.
- Students who choose geography as a GCSE option generally make good progress. As students of all abilities are encouraged to take the subject they sit both higher- or lower-tier papers. Despite good individual interventions and support and thorough revision classes, the overall results remain below the national average.
- Students are now required to have five A* to C grades with English and mathematics to opt to take geography at AS and A level. Previously, progress, while good from students' starting points, led to results below those nationally. The current A-level cohort is predicted greater success; although it is too early to be certain of the impact of the school's strategy for raising attainment using this approach.

Quality of teaching in geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Lessons are carefully planned and are well structured. They follow the whole-school policies on the provision for those new to learning English and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This results in a good range of interesting activities and appropriate resources at a variety of levels in the 50-minute lessons. This includes good use of relevant maps. Teachers have good relationships with their students and expect a high degree of effort and application.
- Objectives are clear and the pace of lessons is generally brisk. Occasionally, a minority of students lose interest and teachers implement the agreed behaviour sanctions effectively. The majority of students are well behaved but all would benefit from swifter adjustments to plans if interest flags.
- While teachers are good at promoting the use of accurate geographical vocabulary, they are less good at modelling succinct sentences that review the geographical concepts taught; especially to support those newer to using English or students who are slower to learn. At the other end of the spectrum, they do not always alert able students to which concepts will be important in later learning. For example, by mentioning the tension between increased tourism and global ecological issues.
- Teachers use a good range of strategies overall, such as paired and group work, group decision-making, individual application and controlled assessments. Increased personal learning is promoted well as students move up the school.

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to structure and support students' learning. The access and use of ICT is thoroughly embedded in the department and students use it regularly to research and process information at progressively more complex levels.
- Assessment and marking are clear strengths of the teaching, next steps are clearly evident and students know their targets for improvement. Teachers use each student's assessment information to set and monitor goals for progress. They are vigilant and prompt to intervene when a student starts to slip behind. Students taking public examinations know their target grades and what they need to do to achieve them.

The quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The department has made impressive strides in modernising the curriculum over recent years while maintaining a good emphasis on places and geographical techniques.
- Students find topics stimulating and are keen to discuss the implications of both natural events and political changes. They were very thoughtful in their evaluation of the impact of the recent ash clouds on commerce and the reasons for and against the one child policy in China.
- The curriculum balances local relevance and wider global issues well and students' work year-on-year on fair trade is impressive.
- The subject leader has used a good variety of web-based materials and subject association advice alongside examination board's requirements to develop a dynamic and relevant approach to topics. Geographical information systems (GIS) work is being carefully introduced to ensure that students of all abilities can master the skills and use the information to test their hypotheses.
- Fieldwork, while being somewhat curtailed by budget restraints, is suitably planned to enrich the curriculum at each key stage. Teachers give freely of their personal time to support both overseas trips, such as to Iceland and Italy (open to all students) as well as in plans for future sixth-form work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- The head of humanities and the subject leader have a clear vision for the development of geography. You also keep a watchful eye on developments and how they relate to the whole-school drive for improvement. Senior staff are quick to look for solutions to potential problems, such as the limited time and funds available for fieldwork. Imaginative solutions are sought and effective action taken.
- High expectations are communicated to all staff and those new to teaching are well supported.

- The subject leader makes good use of the subject association and the action plan for geography to guide the work of the department. She is keen to ensure that teachers keep up to date with their subject knowledge and she coped well with the many new requirements relating to controlled assessments and additional examinations throughout the year.
- Evaluation is thorough. The humanities faculty was fully reviewed recently. Teaching is monitored effectively. Everyone is aware that there is more to do to raise standards and that there are no quick-fix solutions.
- The school is relentless in its drive to improve the life chances of all its students by ensuring that their basic English and mathematics skills improve in all subjects including geography.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising standards further by focusing more sharply on supporting individual students by:
 - ensuring that teachers use enough model and summary sentences that encapsulate the key information taught so that students can refer to them to review and consolidate their learning
 - indicating key concepts that will come up later, either in the sequence of lessons in a unit or in the students' examination syllabus, to challenge more able students to broaden their geographical learning.

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

Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector