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Mrs C Claridge
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Dear Mrs Claridge

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 July 2011 to look at work in citizenship.

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; a meeting with parents and governors; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons, an assembly and other related activities.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship is good.

Achievement in citizenship

Achievement in citizenship is good.

- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who enjoy their life at school. Staff work well with parents and pupils to develop a sense of community.
- Despite a range of needs, from their starting points, pupils make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress in their learning in citizenship. There is evidence of pupils taking often small but distinct steps in their learning over time. In most cases, they gain the foundations of communication, an awareness of others and the ability to make choices and express preferences, enabling them to interact and engage with the world around them. The school's close monitoring and detailed record keeping developed in the last two years clearly illustrate this.

- Teachers encourage pupils to make choices and influence decisions about their learning and wider school activities. For example, the school council discussed the work that they recently completed on creating an eco-school display board and the work needed in the future. This includes, for example, creating Christmas boxes for children in other countries and further developing the school website to include the work of the Eco committee.
- Pupils gain good understanding of representation through electing representatives for their school council. Much good work is evident in terms of pupils' knowledge and understanding of identity and diversity through planned curriculum activities, visiting places of worship and developing their links with Ireland. These add significantly to pupils' understanding and awareness of cultural diversity.

Quality of teaching in citizenship

The quality of teaching in citizenship is good.

- Teaching is thoughtful and well organised in meeting a range of individual needs. A consistent approach is evident; this is calm and encouraging in promoting pupils' independence, confidence and participation.
- Good teamwork is evident from teachers, support staff and parents; teachers and support staff move seamlessly between roles to support pupils' learning. Most members of staff are skilful in encouraging pupils, regardless of their needs, to reflect on the options offered, pose questions and decide actions and responses for themselves. Where pupils continue to choose similar activities, teachers skilfully narrow the options offered to them to ensure that pupils experience a range of activities.
- Good attention is paid in general terms to ongoing professional development for all members of staff. However, building staff expertise and specialism in citizenship is at early stages of development, particularly in relation to some of the subject's key concepts. The school works well with other schools in sharing and further developing its good practice. The transition arrangements for pupils moving to new schools are well developed and ensure that pupils settle quickly.
- Relationships with parents are highly positive. The school's careful tracking and recording of progress provide a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. Every pupil has a diary of school activities which is shared with parents on a daily basis. In turn, some of the parents document the activities their children are involved in at home so that teachers can build on these experiences.

Quality of the curriculum in citizenship

The quality of the citizenship curriculum is satisfactory.

- A range of suitable activities supports learning in the subject, including SEAL activities, circle time and role play. A number of strategies are used to enable pupils to share their emotions, including feeling happy, sad or

angry using emotional paddles. Consequently, pupils are supported well in developing the personal skills and qualities required to appreciate and respect others' feelings. Some other key elements of citizenship provision are at an early stage of development. The school has plans to address this as part of a recently developed citizenship policy and procedures.

- The school makes good use of topical events to enhance learning; for example, considering the royal wedding where the whole school was involved in re-enacting the event. It also arranged the election of the school's council to coincide with the last general election to reinforce the concept of voting and democracy, and also encouraged pupils to choose their fundraising responses to Comic Relief.
- A range of agencies and external organisations makes a positive contribution to the programme that helps pupils to understand the roles of others in the community. Good attention is paid to caring for the environment and developing awareness of issues around sustainability. Individual pupils take on key responsibilities to contribute to the school's Eco friendly school; for example, switching off the lights when appropriate. Pupils also experience a range of outings, such as the residential trip to Dol-y-Moch in Wales and the Old Vicarage Adventure Centre. These visits encourage pupils to become independent and take responsibility through participation in a range of challenging activities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship

The effectiveness of leadership and management in citizenship is good.

- There is a clear vision and commitment to citizenship learning. This is shared by parents and governors who actively support and reinforce this. Citizenship is seen as central to the life and work of the school. As one parent-governor said, 'Citizenship is at the heart of the school, giving pupils the skills to participate in the wider community'. There is determination to encourage pupils to be involved in their own learning, make decisions and help them feel valued and part of a cohesive school community. This approach fosters good teamwork and a growing commitment from the whole staff.
- Ambition and a clear commitment are clear to continue to improve provision and outcomes. To achieve this, robust monitoring has been implemented, informed by lesson observations and evaluation of pupils' progress. The school recognises, however, that it needs to further develop its curriculum to include all the key elements of citizenship to provide structured opportunities for all pupils to broaden their experiences.
- One of the school's key strengths is the excellent transition work in place for outreach work and to support pupils who are moving to another school. The school has a totally flexible approach in order to meet individual needs and personalise provision accordingly.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the curriculum is planned to include all the key elements of citizenship and provide structured opportunities for all pupils to broaden their experiences.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship 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

Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector