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Mrs K Godfrey  
Headteacher  
East Garforth Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Godfrey

### **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 20 September 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 six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is good.

- Good teaching, an exciting play-based curriculum and an emphasis on first-hand experiences in the locality in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning.
- This good progress continues in Key Stage 2 where pupils' knowledge and understanding of the locality are used very effectively to look at similarities and differences between places and how they change over time. For example, during the visit, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were using photographs well to identify the differences between geographical features in their locality and in the countries they were investigating: Chile, India and South Africa.
- In Years 5 and 6 pupils were using the results of their investigations to present convincing arguments for change. Pupils took on the roles of

different interest groups to make decisions about whether an increase in the local population should lead to the further development of their town. They considered which developments would be beneficial and where they should be located by making effective use of maps, air photographs, local news reports and census data.

- Pupils have a good knowledge of where places are because they learn to use a range of maps, including Ordnance Survey maps, globes and atlases well and because extensive use is made of visits within the region.
- The use of the school's outdoor environment to support learning and the development of fieldwork skills is an area that the school has identified as a priority for further development.
- Pupils say learning about geography is 'fun'. They particularly appreciate the role they play in identifying questions to investigate and visits out of school. Older pupils explained that the way in which they learn about geography helps them to 'better understand what is happening in the world'.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning in geography. They enthusiastically answer questions, take pride in their work and behave very well in discussions and collaborative learning tasks in lessons.

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

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand what constitutes effective learning in the subject. Pre-learning tasks are used well to assess pupils' prior knowledge and ensure that units of work focus on the things they would like to learn more about.
- Lessons are very well planned and sequenced around an enquiry approach of 'learning challenges' to answer 'big questions'. There is a strong emphasis on developing a range of lifelong learning skills, discussion and collaborative group work.
- All of the lessons observed were judged to be good. High-quality questioning involved all pupils. In the best lessons, teachers encouraged pupils to use precise geographical terminology in their answers. 'Mini-plenaries' were used extremely effectively to allow pupils to reflect on what and how they had learnt.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning in the subject.
- Topics culminate in a sustained piece of work completed at home. These 'learning logs' are used well to inform end-of-unit assessments. Although they are marked accurately, feedback comments are not always focused sharply on pupils' next steps.
- Detailed end-of-unit assessments and moderation of work by the subject leadership team ensure that the school has an accurate view of progress and attainment.

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

The quality of the curriculum in geography is outstanding.

- The carefully designed scheme of work, introduced in September 2009, focuses on promoting creativity, independence and enjoyment. It has reinvigorated the curriculum. It provides an excellent two-yearly cycle of geographically focused units of work which sequentially build pupils' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. This has been carefully monitored, evaluated and improved to ensure consistency and rigour.
- Pupils of all ages have excellent opportunities to find the answers to their questions and learn from first-hand experiences.
- The curriculum is continuously enriched through the extensive use of memorable learning activities including the use of visitors, focused days and weeks.
- There is a good emphasis on using geography at a range of scales from local to global and well-developed links with a partner school in South Africa.
- Pupils are very aware of topical issues and are able to participate in a number of incidental geographical learning opportunities around the school including 'geography in the news' and challenges such as identifying countries from their shapes on a globe.
- Links with other subjects, particularly literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are well established.
- High-quality displays around the school celebrate the outstanding curriculum and pupils' growing knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- The subject leadership team is ensuring that the subject has a prominent place in the school's curriculum.
- A detailed geography policy is in place.
- A comprehensive range of strategies is used to monitor standards and ensure curriculum coverage. These strategies ensure that the school has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses.
- The school is continually striving to improve the quality of geography and ensure greater rigour in the development of geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. It benchmarks the quality of its provision against subject association quality statements and national reports and shares its expertise with local schools. This demonstrates a very good capacity to continue to improve its work.

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

- broadening the use of the school's outdoor environment to further enhance learning and develop pupils' fieldwork skills
- placing greater emphasis on pupils' precise use of geographical terminology
- improving the consistency of feedback on pupils' learning logs to ensure that it informs them how to improve their work in geography.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop geography in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Angela Milner**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**