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Mr K Grayson  
Headteacher  
Elston Hall Primary School  
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Wolverhampton  
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Dear Mr Grayson

### **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 17 November 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is good.

- Attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils of all abilities make good progress in developing their historical skills and understanding. Pupils undertake a wide range of research activities both inside and outside the classroom, such as finding out how people in Tudor times lived by visiting Moseley Old Hall.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully for themselves before answering questions. In Year 3, pupils were encouraged to ask good questions about sources for their Celts and Romans topic.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent in history. Pupils commented that history is 'fun and very enjoyable'. They said they enjoyed organising their ideas in different ways and presenting them to the rest of the class. They

liked comparing the past with the present and finding out about how the way they live now has developed from other times and places.

- Behaviour is excellent in lessons and pupils work very well together in small groups.
- Pupils have accurate knowledge about the topics they study, and have a good understanding of the importance of basing their ideas on evidence. They like using laptop computers in class to do their own research.

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

The quality of teaching in history is outstanding.

- Teachers and learning assistants develop excellent relationships with pupils. Lessons are planned extremely well to ensure that the activities engage all pupils. Lessons are based on very clear learning objectives which are shared carefully with the pupils.
- Marking in pupils' books is extremely good and indicates how they can improve their work. In lessons, teachers constantly communicate their expectations to pupils and give excellent support to those who find some topics difficult.
- Teachers monitor the progress of individual pupils in their development of general skills extremely well, but have yet to monitor rigorously enough how well pupils' specific historical skills are developing.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to develop pupils' understanding of topics and enhance their presentations to the rest of their class is good.

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

The quality of the history curriculum is good.

- The school has developed a good creative curriculum where there is a rolling programme of history topics, as well as numerous opportunities for history to provide the context for work in other foundation subjects. Although generally there are a number of visits to places within the local community, opportunities are missed to explore local history.
- There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' historical skills. Pupils know how to ask good questions about sources and are developing their understanding of key history concepts, such as change over time, well. Their understanding of interpretations in history is also good.
- The school organises a good range of visits to places of historical interest and older pupils said they enjoyed visiting R.A.F. Museum Cosford to find out about aspects of the Second World War.

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

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of history is good.

- The subject leader has only been in post for a few weeks but has already begun to build further on the good practice developed in earlier years.
- The school has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of history. An excellent policy booklet sets out clearly how the subject leader sees history developing in the school. Good plans are in place to strengthen further the monitoring of history provision throughout the school.
- Classroom monitoring of history teaching is good and is supported by regular reviews of work and planning.

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

- ensuring that the monitoring of pupils' progress in historical skills and concepts is more rigorous so that it is much clearer how pupils can best be supported to improve their work at a faster pace
- ensuring there are more opportunities for pupils to study the history of their locality.

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

**Peter Limm**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**