

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



23 November 2011

Mrs K White  
Headteacher  
Isham Church of England Primary School  
Church Street  
Isham  
Kettering  
NN14 1HD

Dear Mrs White

### **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 7 November 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

#### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is good.

- Standards are generally above the levels expected for the age of the pupils, and are often high. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the topics they have studied. Their locational knowledge is particularly good.
- Pupils enjoy their active learning in geography lessons. The way that topics immerse pupils in the background and culture of the places that they study enriches their learning experience and promotes a curiosity about their wider world.
- Pupils' skills are well developed. They research and analyse information effectively and work very well together to make geographical decisions. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) competently

and develop a range of skills in data handling, sometimes based on fieldwork.

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in lessons. They enjoy their learning and articulate their ideas and understanding exceptionally well.

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

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Lessons have suitable learning objectives drawn from the programmes of study. Teaching is good because activities are carefully planned and prepared, and teachers and other adults manage and direct lessons skilfully so that learning is fun.
- Activities engage all pupils in the class. Typically, pupils are given assignments to research or debate in pairs or groups so that they develop a range of skills and can refine their thinking before exchanging information and ideas. Year 3/4 pupils for example were put in role and asked to make decisions about Venice's future, while Year 5/6 pupils used a variety of resources to research the physical environment of North America and make links with different indigenous peoples.
- Teachers have high expectations and make regular assessments of pupils' progress in lessons and through regular marking. However, learning outcomes for different pupils are not defined in sufficient detail. As a result, teachers cannot gauge progress against outcomes in lesson plenaries or assess systematically the development of particular skills and understanding.

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

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. The wide range of topics at different scales and contexts enables pupils to develop a sense of place and good awareness of the global dimension.
- Key aspects of understanding are covered in schemes of work, but these are not mapped out to ensure that specific concepts and skills are developed progressively. Pupils have opportunities for fieldwork, but their skills in this area are not developed systematically.
- Topics provide imaginative opportunities for learning and link well with other areas of the curriculum so that pupils develop their wider aptitudes and consolidate their skills, for example in literacy and ICT.
- Classrooms provide a stimulating environment for learning, with high-quality displays and imaginative resources. Pupils can work in an igloo, on a beach or in a vaporetto, depending on what part of the world they are studying!

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- Procedures are in place for monitoring and reviewing provision. The school's very close working relationships enable teachers to share good practice and adapt their work effectively in consultation with one another.
- In the absence of a subject leader, the school has had no recent subject training or enrichment. However, you oversee the subject effectively and monitor accurately pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The development of geography has not been a priority in recent years, but it is currently a key focus on the school development plan, with suitable priorities for improvement.

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

- reviewing the programmes of study to map in detail the progressive development of specific skills and concepts so that:
  - learning outcomes in lessons are sharply defined
  - higher order skills and more complex understanding are developed and assessed more systematically.

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

**Paul Brooker**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**