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Ms W Heritage  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Heritage

### **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 2 February 2012 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 two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

#### **Achievement in geography**

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils make good progress to achieve standards that are generally above the levels expected. Pupils' locational knowledge and geographical vocabulary are particularly good; most have a sound knowledge of the places studied and what they are like.
- Older pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the topics they have studied, particularly when they have enjoyed active learning, for example in a Welsh river.
- Pupils are able to reach conclusions and can present well-reasoned arguments to explain their thinking and can articulate their understanding impressively well. However, they do not always make connections

between different elements of their learning, for example physical and human processes.

- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively and develop a range of skills in data handling, sometimes based on the collection of first-hand data.
- Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. Their evident enthusiasm reflects their interest in the world around them and their enjoyment of geography. Older pupils, for example, spoke excitedly about doing fieldwork and their role in improving amenities in the local park.

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

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Teaching is well structured, lively and engaging. Assessment criteria provide a sharp focus for pupils' learning and clear benchmarks to gauge their progress. Lessons proceed at a good pace because teachers and other adults skilfully steer pupils' thinking with judicious questioning.
- Teachers make good use of resources, including multimedia, geographical information systems and ICT to engage the pupils' interest and promote their curiosity about their wider world. Good use is made of the outside environment and fieldwork to support learning.
- Activities are well prepared so that lessons are fun and pupils are actively engaged in learning, for example when blindfolded pupils in Year 1 were given directions to navigate their way around the hall.
- Frequent use is made of maps to support learning. Classrooms provide a stimulating environment for learning, with interactive displays and interesting resources. Displays in public areas also bring geography alive and promote pupils' awe, wonder and curiosity.
- Assessment is a notable strength. Teachers mark work conscientiously and make close reference to specific learning objectives when evaluating pupils' progress.

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

The quality of the curriculum in geography is satisfactory.

- The curriculum covers a suitably broad range of topics at different scales, enabling pupils to systematically develop their skills and build their locational knowledge. The annual focus on a specific continent effectively promotes the pupils' knowledge and understanding of contrasting parts of the world.
- The pupils' understanding of the global dimension and key geographical concepts such as sustainability, stewardship and interdependence are promoted more effectively through the school's wider initiatives than the geography topics. Links with a school in Gambia, for example, and whole-school fair trade initiatives, extend the pupils' learning well.

- The curriculum consolidates and develops the pupils' wider skills, particularly in literacy. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to undertake fieldwork, including a river study on the Year 6 residential.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- The subject is well led and managed despite the lack of external training or enrichment for the school. The subject leader draws on her knowledge and expertise to guide the development of the subject, using a range of resources.
- Systematic procedures are in place to monitor provision and pupil progress. The subject leader reviews teachers' planning, scrutinises work and speaks with the pupils to evaluate the subject's effectiveness. Self-evaluation routinely involves governors and informs strategic planning and development.

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

- promoting greater creativity in the geography curriculum to develop pupils' deeper understanding of key concepts, such as sustainability, stewardship and interdependence by:
  - ensuring that these concepts are a central focus of some topics
  - drawing on the wider initiatives, such as 'outdoor learning' and 'global links' to promote pupils' geographical understanding and skills.

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**