

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr D Watson
Acting Executive Headteacher
Old Moat Community Primary School
Old Moat Lane
Withington
Manchester
M20 3FN

Dear Mr Watson

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 7 March 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 12 parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is satisfactory.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is satisfactory.

- Many children enter school with knowledge and understanding of the world that is well below that expected for their age. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, secure skills are being developed. Increased opportunities to develop children's skills and broaden their knowledge are being provided.
- Children's speaking and listening skills and the enrichment of their vocabulary are promoted well. This is enhanced through a suitable play-based curriculum.
- Learning is supported by a range of appropriate indoor and outdoor activities, such as children using maps to find pirate artefacts or to locate mathematical shapes in the playground.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils understand that the world extends beyond their locality. They are able to design and interpret simple maps and know how to get to different places such as Australia in a variety of ways. Pupils are also able to describe physical and human features of places such as Egypt and impact of the River Nile on agriculture.
- Work develops and progresses suitably in Key Stage 2. Pupils can draw plans of their classroom accurately and contrast different environments such as Castleton with Withington in Years 3 and 4. Skills and knowledge deepens suitably in Years 5 and 6 where themes such as 'How do natural disasters affect people and their environment?' increase pupils' knowledge of physical and human geography.
- Enquiry and research skills are developing because pupils are being provided with increased opportunities to practise and extend them.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they respond well to classroom expectations. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.

Quality of teaching in geography

The quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory.

- Examples of good teaching were observed during the visit. Lessons were well planned and contained a variety of interesting activities which were suitably matched to pupils' needs. Many lessons were practical and challenging which pupils found engaging and motivating.
- A range of opportunities was provided for pupils to work in pairs or small groups. Teachers ensured that key vocabulary and terminology was shared and used appropriately. Good support was provided for gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Scrutiny of books and other work however, reveals a satisfactory range of work. Work is generally neatly presented and regularly marked. Although some teachers identify what pupils need to do next to improve when marking pupils' work, this practice is not consistent.
- Increasingly good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. The use of interactive whiteboards and visualisers by teachers and the use of programmable toys and computers by pupils help promote learning. The use of geographical information systems (GIS) and satellite images to ask geographical questions and describe landscapes is developing well.
- A new assessment system which focuses on enquiry and skills has been devised, discussed and approved but not yet implemented. Consequently, school leaders do not have an accurate view of pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school. In addition, assessment outcomes are not used to modify or adapt programmes of study.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is satisfactory.

- In the main, the curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance. A good start has been made to introducing a key-questions approach in the subject. Appropriate reference has been made to the National Curriculum when constructing the areas of study.
- A number of interesting themes have been developed such as 'Have you walked in dinosaurs' footprints?' 'Do you like to be beside the seaside?' and 'Can the 2012 Olympics really bring world harmony?' Although most contain suitable geographical content, relevant opportunities are not taken in some units to further develop and extend pupils' geographical knowledge.
- Appropriate links are made with other subjects such as literacy, numeracy, ICT and history. Increasing use is made of weblogs (blogs) to share pupils' work with parents and carers, and with other schools. Links are being developed with schools in this country and abroad, such as with Singapore.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of sustainable change following their study of Fairtrade, the environment and the work of the 'Green Heroes' environmental team.
- Fieldwork is satisfactory. A range of visits to places such as Castleton, Eyam and London is scheduled to support identified areas of study. Where visits have taken place, such as to Liverpool, these help bring the subject to life.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- The headteacher and deputy head have assumed responsibility for the subject. They have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses following a range of monitoring and evaluation activity. Plans are in place to devolve leadership, after further training and development, to a subject leader.
- Senior leaders have systematically revised and developed the curriculum following consultation with the staff. An appropriate range of resources is provided, such as maps of different size and scale, globes and atlases to support teaching and learning.
- Good partnership links have been established with the federated school and with other schools in the locality. Insufficient use is made of subject associations to support the school's work in developing the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising standards of attainment and increasing rates of progress by:
 - implementing strategies for assessment and using the outcomes to increase understanding of how well pupils are progressing and by targeting those who are underperforming
 - evaluating programmes of study; ensuring that they build on pupils' prior knowledge and that all units have sufficient coverage
 - developing the role of the subject leader
 - making greater use of subject associations.

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 Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector