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Mrs J Booth
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Booth

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 April 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; a learning walk through the Early Years Foundation Stage unit and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good overall.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age in knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress especially in relation to their immediate locality and environment.
- The rate at which pupils progress is inconsistent. This is because the curriculum lacks clear progression and coverage in the development of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills within some year groups.
- Pupils make particularly good progress towards the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of where

places are located in the world and how physical and human environments impact on people's lives.

- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well. They are able to use data to present information and reach conclusions that show a good appreciation of geographical environments. This is particularly evident when comparing and contrasting different locations in the world.
- Pupils' use of geographical vocabulary is good. As a result of a study of rivers, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were able to explain the physical features of rivers including the use of terms such as source, meander, erosion, and estuary. They were able to explain and demonstrate with the aid of models, how ox-bow lakes are formed.
- Pupils enjoy geography and behave well, particularly when it is presented in a stimulating and creative way as part of topic. For examples, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were captivated when identifying the features of Martinique and comparing them to their home port of Bridlington as part of a 'Pirates' theme.

Quality of teaching in geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- The mixed-age classes are taught effectively. Lessons are planned with pupils' interests and abilities in mind and teaching assistants are well deployed to support learning.
- The lessons observed were good and teachers used a range of strategies to promote geographical understanding including; questioning that challenged pupils' thinking and encourages them to reflect; high levels of pupil engagement through discussion and debate; the use of ICT to support teaching as well as to enhance the quality of pupil's investigations; and a conscious effort to use appropriate geographical vocabulary.
- While teachers are not subject specialists they do value the importance of the subject and recognise the part it has to play in developing pupils' understanding of important social and economic issues in the world around them and which impact on the quality of peoples' lives.
- Plenary sessions are generally used well to determine pupils' progress during lessons. However, on occasions, teachers' planning does not include key questions for use during the plenary which will enhance the quality of assessment.
- A moderated portfolio of pupils' work, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 provides a useful vehicle for teachers to measure and monitor pupils' progress. A similar strategy is currently being developed within Key Stage 2.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is planned to reflect coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. However, some areas of study and opportunities to acquire geographical skills are not always covered in sufficient depth as they should be within some year groups. As a result, progress is inconsistent. The senior leadership team is aware of this and plans are in place to address the matter.
- Some opportunities for fieldwork are identified in planning although they vary in frequency and quality. This inhibits the development of geographical enquiry skills.
- Global Citizenship and International links are initiatives that are well established. Both aspects support the geography curriculum well, making pupils aware of national and global issues. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were being introduced to the concept of 'Fair-Trade' as an opportunity to identify the impact of the physical and natural environment on sustainable lifestyles.
- Opportunities are identified to develop geographical skills and knowledge in other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were learning how to identify the mean, mode, and median using data in relation to rainfall. They were also able to use their knowledge of coordinates to locate places in the world using an atlas by points of longitude and latitude.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- The senior leadership team, including the two subject leaders has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The capacity for improvement is good.
- A recent review of the quality of provision identified areas for improvement, including the need to ensure better skill progression as pupils move through year groups.
- An action is in place to raise attainment further and provide a sound basis by which to secure improvement. However, the impact that initiatives are to have on pupils' learning is not always sufficiently clear.
- The two subject leaders are involved in monitoring provision and outcomes through discussions with staff and pupils, and work scrutinies. Senior leaders also support monitoring by regular observations of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Opportunities for professional development are limited. As yet, the school is not a member of a subject association that would enable staff to access appropriate support, guidance and resources.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing the curriculum to ensure that clearer progression and greater consistency in depth regarding the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills as pupils move through the school

- improving the frequency and quality of fieldwork to promote the acquisition of geographical enquiry skills
- accessing a range of guidance and support to enhance the quality of provision, possibly through membership of a subject association.

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

Christopher Keeler
Her Majesty's Inspector