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Mr G Beetham
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Beetham

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: history

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 26 June 2012 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 you, staff and pupils, a scrutiny of relevant documentation; an analysis of pupils' work; and the observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

Achievement in history

Achievement in history is good.

- From relatively low starting points, pupils make good progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding because they experience good teaching. As a result, their attainment is above age-related expectations. Younger pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, for example, have good understanding of how seaside holidays have changed over time.
- Pupils develop good chronological understanding as they get older, especially through the regular use of timelines. They are aware of important changes over time, for example, in Victorian Britain.
- Pupils enjoy learning the subject and value the wide range of resources and approaches used by the teachers. Many undertake in-depth research

and the higher attainers write extensively and for different audiences and purposes.

- Pupils are able to work with a sound range of historical sources. They can analyse photographs, for example, and can make reasonable deductions about them. Overall, however, their historical skills are slightly underdeveloped.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Their social skills are well developed and they work constructively with each other and with the adults.

Quality of teaching in history

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Lessons are characterised by a good learning environment where teachers plan activities well. They use the interactive whiteboard confidently to make relevant teaching points and to engage the pupils.
- Teachers use a good range of approaches to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils which enables them to make good progress. Enquiry-based learning is well promoted.
- Time is used efficiently and learning is well paced. Pupils are given regular reminders of how much time they have for particular activities and learning is routinely evaluated by the teachers and support staff.
- Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of resources, including information and communication technology, textbooks, worksheets, artefacts and photographs. They value this and stated that it promoted their enjoyment of the subject.

Quality of the curriculum in history

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The history curriculum is broad and balanced, and it meets legal requirements. A good emphasis is placed on developing key concepts, for example, chronological understanding.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to study different themes and issues about the past. These are combined well with the in-depth study of, for example, Roman Britain.
- Pupils' enjoyment of the subject is greatly enhanced by visits to a wide range of historical places. These include Tamworth Castle, Shugborough Estate and Beaumanor Hall. In addition, a well-established tradition involves inviting visitors, including the pupils' grandparents, into school to talk about aspects of history.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in history

The effectiveness of leadership and management in history is good.

- The subject coordinator provides good leadership and direction to the subject.
- Self evaluation in the subject is accurate and appropriate strengths and weaknesses are identified. This is done through a process of scrutinising pupils' work, teachers' planning and through informal discussions with other staff. However, at present the subject coordinator does not regularly observe lessons.
- Pupils' progress is tracked well through the regular use of formal assessments of the units studied. This system is kept under review and discussed with all staff to ensure that assessments are accurate and reliable.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening the teaching and learning of a wider range of historical skills
- strengthening quality assurance procedures so that the subject coordinator is enabled to observe lessons more regularly.

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

Champak Chauhan
Additional Inspector