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Mrs M Slymn
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Slymn

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 21 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

Achievement in history

Achievement in history is good.

- Attainment on entry is broadly average and pupils make good progress throughout the school so that their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. No discernible differences exist between the performances of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' historical skills are developed well at both Key Stage 1 and 2. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions about how they know facts about the past and are given good opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and imagination through varied and stimulating tasks.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed very well through the study of history. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to write at length and literacy is well developed generally. More able pupils are not consistently

challenged effectively in all lessons. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are being developed well through history.

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They work well together in small groups and by themselves. They demonstrate a keen and enthusiastic interest in history and speak clearly and confidently about their lessons and activities.

Quality of teaching in history

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- A wide range of learning tasks is planned for all year groups and teachers are skilled in engaging pupils actively in lessons.
- Assessment is good. However, the mapping of pupils' progress in the development of their historical skills is embryonic and teachers' plans do not yet identify clearly enough how the skills are to be tracked across the topics studied.
- Teachers use good questions to elicit accurate responses from pupils. This is especially the case when pupils investigate historical sources, such as holiday photographs from different times.
- Pupils say they enjoy history lessons because they encourage imaginative thinking about the past and provide stimulating tasks such as asking questions about the use of artefacts.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and comments are generally helpful in enabling pupils to know how well they are making progress and how they can improve in the future.

Quality of the curriculum in history

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The new creative curriculum meets requirements for history. The subject coordinator is very keen that, in thematic work, history still has a clear identity and focus.
- The creative curriculum provides many opportunities for history to be studied with other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy history and find the local-history aspects interesting. They particularly liked visiting local historic houses and museums. They were particularly animated about the finding, in a nearby field, of the Staffordshire Hoard.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in history

The effectiveness of leadership and management in history is good.

- The subject leader provides good leadership and vision for the subject. She has a good understanding of requirements and is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

- The subject leader monitors provision through discussions with staff and scrutinising pupils' work when appropriate. However, she does not undertake enough formal observations of lessons.
- Good documentation is evident for the subject and well-thought-out history topic plans have been created.
- The subject coordinator has been able to attend local training in history and is keen to exploit the growing cluster-work with local schools.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring greater rigour in tracking pupils' progression in developing historical skills and concepts across topics and the curriculum generally
- providing more challenge and stretch for able and gifted pupils in history
- improving the monitoring and observation of teaching and learning in history.

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

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector