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Mrs M Middlehurst
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Middlehurst

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 21 June 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- Attainment when pupils leave the school is broadly in line with national averages. Children enter school with a range of understanding about their immediate environment and the world around them. Their knowledge and understanding continue to develop quickly. Learning supports children's curiosity of the world around them and varied activities promote cooperation, turn-taking and investigation.
- Geography is taught through a thematic approach which supports the teaching of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding well. Geography themes are prioritised and, as a result, pupils are exposed to a rich curriculum of geographical concepts.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' basic skills are also developed. For example, pupils were observed writing letters to pen pals in less

economically developed countries. This supported a growing understanding of contrasting localities. Place and locational skills are good because map work is well developed across the school.

- Pupils enjoy geography. They show good behaviour in lessons and talk enthusiastically about their geography work.

Quality of teaching in geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Geography teaching and learning are good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and geography forms the basis for much of the learning in school.
- Teachers show good subject knowledge and a range of geographical concepts is taught well. For example, in a Year 5 /6 lesson pupils were discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the Olympic Games held in London. This debate encompassed a range of geographical concepts and resulted in a meaningful dialogue.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) and geographical information systems (GIS) which enhance learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 enjoyed investigating plotting their local area with the support of an interactive street map programme.
- Marking of pupils' work provides next steps for pupils' learning. This supports pupils in making good progress in their geographical knowledge.
- Learning is enquiry based. This motivates and challenges pupils and debate is encouraged. Learning is given a clear focus and pupils enjoy researching aspects of geography.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and well planned. This covers a wide range of geographical knowledge, skills and understanding and includes the teaching of both physical and human geography. The Eco Club discusses relevant issues such as sustainability.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the curriculum and are appreciative of the opportunities to investigate different locations. However, opportunities for fieldwork are, currently, less well developed.
- Personal development is well supported through the curriculum. This provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- There is a good range of map work, where pupils learn to use a range of maps of varying scales. They enjoy discovering places and their locations through looking at the globe and a variety of atlases.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- Leaders in the school are committed to the development of geography. It holds a high profile in school, resulting in pupils being keen to learn more about the subject.
- Pupil voice is used to inform geography across the school. Their views are considered and acted upon. This information is used along with monitoring to inform the geography action plan to secure further improvements.
- The subject leader has recently taken responsibility for the subject. He has completed an evaluation of the effectiveness of geography. This has been presented to yourself and governing body.
- The school has recently joined a professional subject organisation. Leaders are confident that this will further support development of geography.
- Monitoring of attainment in geography is developing. This results in teachers beginning to develop a better understanding of achievement across the school. However, this is not yet as rigorous as it might be.
- Leaders in school know the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. However, monitoring and evaluation procedures are not yet sufficiently well developed to better inform self-evaluation or development planning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening leadership and management by:
 - formally recording accurate self-evaluation
 - improving monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that these are sharply focused on raising outcomes for all pupils
 - ensuring that assessment procedures in geography are robust and provide an accurate view of achievement
- developing the use of fieldwork to provide first-hand learning experiences for pupils.

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

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector