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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Mrs Jacqui Ralphson
Horndean Infant School
Merchistoun Road
Horndean
Hampshire
PO8 9LS

Dear Mrs Ralphson

Subject inspection of Horndean Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 13 November 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. The findings do not change the overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding from the last section 5 inspection.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for a no formal designation inspection of schools. The inspection was carried out to enable Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

Pupils in your school are passionate about learning history. They enthuse about the experiences they have and the knowledge they gain about the historical events and key historical figures they study. For example, pupils excitedly showed me that, when they put on a top hat, they 'magically turn into Samuel Pepys who watched the Great Fire of London', before telling me all about how the fire started and spread. Pupils value learning outside of the classroom, such as when they went to talk to some pensioners about what life was like in the last century. Pupils are proud of their work on display around the school, including recent poems about what we remember on Remembrance Sunday.

Pupils are developing an understanding of how we learn about history. For example, they are starting to understand that we can use diaries and pictures that are from the time they are learning about, although these might not always be completely trustworthy. Similarly, pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of chronology, and can make comparisons between life in the past and how we live now. They are starting to compare features of different historical periods also. For example, they made comparisons of castle features when they visited Southsea Castle and

Portchester Castle. Such visits also develop pupils' understanding of the rich history of their local area, as well as contributing to equipping pupils with the cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

You have made sure that history sits securely within your topic-based approach to teaching the curriculum. Several topics have a history focus, and the additional 'interesting interruptions', which are in-depth explorations into a historical event or person, ensure that the breadth of history you cover matches the aims of the national curriculum.

Teachers typically sequence activities appropriately and plan tasks that help pupils to build on what they already know. Homework, known as 'prep', is designed to encourage pupils to find out about history by introducing them to the topics they are going to study. This gives pupils a solid foundation on which to build their learning when they start the topic in school. Disadvantaged pupils are supported well in school with additional teaching in history if they need to develop more secure knowledge of a topic. Teachers' careful consideration of how to adapt activities ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access fully the history curriculum.

The knowledge that pupils gain in history enables them to write detailed accounts of events such as the Gunpowder Plot. Pupils also use their historical understanding to inspire other work that they do, such as using the Great Fire of London as the theme when learning to use pastels in art. Teachers assess pupils' understanding of key historical concepts in history, including change and continuity, well. They check their knowledge of history through questioning pupils during lessons and through checking that historical content is accurate when referred to in their writing.

Pupils in key stage 1 are well prepared to start learning history because of the impressive attention the school pays to how well children in the early years develop their understanding of the world. You make sure that children develop their understanding of change over time through activities such as comparing photographs of themselves as babies and children, and through making sure that pupils regularly use time-based vocabulary, such as 'yesterday' and 'last week', accurately. Children are also included in whole-school celebrations which link to history events. For example, during my visit, they were drawing poppies to commemorate Remembrance Sunday.

You have identified that, although your history curriculum largely meets the ambition of the national curriculum, there is more that could be done to develop pupils' historical vocabulary. You have begun this work by identifying some key words that you want pupils to use accurately in their speech and writing. However, there is more to do as, currently, pupils develop misconceptions about some of the abstract terms they encounter, such as 'parliament' and 'Catholic'. These are important historical concepts that pupils will revisit throughout their time in school. You know this and are starting to map out when pupils first come into contact with

such terms so that teachers can better prioritise teaching the meanings of these terms. This will enable pupils to make even better connections between the events they are learning about and to start to think more deeply about historical concepts.

Teachers feel well supported to develop the history curriculum. They appreciate being able to work together in teams to plan topics and activities. They feel a sense of responsibility to make sure that pupils get the best possible provision and, typically, have strong knowledge of the topics they teach. Senior leaders and the history subject lead support teachers well in their work. The key history concepts to be covered are mapped out well. However, you reflected during my visit that further improvements to curriculum plans could be made to ensure that the key historical knowledge and terminology that you want pupils to learn are more clearly defined.

Evidence

During this visit, I met with you, other senior leaders, the subject leader for history and a group of teachers to talk about the history curriculum. I visited lessons in the early years and key stage 1. I met with two groups of pupils to talk about their learning in history. I evaluated work in pupils' books. I scrutinised curriculum planning.

Context

Horndean Infant School is a large infant school. There are 270 pupils on roll. Most pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportions who are disadvantaged or with SEND are below the national averages. A slightly larger-than-average proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Nearly all pupils join the school at the start of the early years and stay until the end of Year 2. Staffing at the school is stable.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old

Her Majesty's Inspector