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Miss Katy Thompson
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Miss Thompson

Subject inspection of Balksbury Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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

You have recently revised the history curriculum. The subject leader for history has worked hard to ensure that the history curriculum is ambitious and matches the breadth of the national curriculum. You have ensured that pupils study a wide range of historical periods, significant people and events, such as the Roman empire, Florence Nightingale, ancient Egypt and the Victorian era. Leaders have thought carefully about why pupils should study these areas of history and what they will know and understand by the end of key stage 1.

The aims of your history curriculum are to ensure that pupils are excited, interested and curious about the past. Leaders introduced a new history curriculum from September 2019. This is currently being embedded across early years and key stage 1 and uses a topic-based approach to deliver the history curriculum. Whilst the

national curriculum is fully covered in these new plans, pupils do not always connect the knowledge that they have remembered so that they are able to link historical events and understand historical concepts, such as 'power' or how democracy has developed over time. For example, in Year 1 pupils begin to learn about the king's 'power' during the gunpowder plot but do not build on this understanding during their subsequent history topics.

Pupils enjoy learning about the past at Balksbury Infant School. Teachers ensure that activities are engaging and well planned. Consequently, pupils are very keen to know more about the past. For example, in Year 1, pupils learn about causation by discussing Guy Fawkes' motivation with their teacher.

Teachers feel well supported in teaching history. They value leaders' support in providing time for staff to work together on planning and curriculum development. This has ensured that teachers sequence activities well within history topics so that pupils connect their learning across lessons within the topic.

Teachers plan activities that encourage pupils to be inquisitive. Teachers explain lesson content clearly. This helps pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to improve their use of historical vocabulary and remember more over time.

By the end of key stage 1, pupils know and understand more about the key features of the topics they have studied in history because of the improved history curriculum. Consequently, they are increasingly well prepared to develop their understanding in key stage 2. Pupils take their enthusiasm for history into their further studies at Balksbury Junior School.

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, Year 1 and Year 2. I met with three groups of pupils to talk about their learning in history. I evaluated work in pupils' books. I scrutinised curriculum planning.

Context

Balksbury Infant School is an average-sized infant school. There are 259 pupils on roll. Most pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The proportion who are disadvantaged or with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is the same as the national average. 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, and the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector