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Mr David Sammels
Headteacher
Mayflower Academy
41 Ham Drive
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Dear Mr Sammels

Subject inspection of Mayflower Academy

Following my visit to your school on 3 December 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. My visit focused on history.

Main findings

You and your staff think deeply about the curriculum and how to deliver it. Teachers pay close attention to the latest research on how pupils learn and how best to help them do so. As a result, the curriculum is securely built on a shared and clearly articulated approach to teaching. In history, this teaching ensures that pupils' learning is carefully sequenced so that they reach the ambitious goals that staff set them. Consequently, pupils are developing both their substantive and disciplinary historical knowledge well. The history curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils who might need a little extra support, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are helped to achieve the same challenging goals as their peers.

From the early years onwards, there is a coherent programme in place to develop pupils' historical knowledge. In Nursery and Reception, children learn to distinguish past, present and future. They learn that people and things change over time.

Teachers begin to develop their chronological understanding by introducing them to timelines. In key stage 1, pupils start to develop deeper historical knowledge. Year 2 pupils, for example, are knowledgeable about Sir Francis Drake, the Armada and the link to Plymouth. In key stage 2, pupils develop further their ability to think historically. In Year 5, pupils can give a sophisticated account of Victorian society. Pupils in Year 6 can write explanations of the origins of the Second World War that consider a range of factors. They base their answers on a secure knowledge of causes, such as the Treaty of Versailles, the weakness of the League of Nations and the British policy of appeasement.

The curriculum's purpose, aims and scope are at least as demanding and ambitious as the national curriculum. To ensure this breadth and depth, the history curriculum team provides strong leadership and support for their colleagues. In turn, teachers are enthusiastic about the place of history in the curriculum and take professional responsibility for the development of their own subject knowledge. Because teachers understand how pupils learn and what it means to make progress in history, they make appropriate choices when they design activities for pupils to do. They know how to sequence the components of learning so that pupils develop secure knowledge over time.

History is used as a 'driver' for your whole curriculum. Sometimes, this means that the overarching enquiry question is phrased in a way that does not recognise enough the distinctiveness of history as a discipline. On occasion, this can hamper the development of pupils' historical thinking.

Evidence

I met with you and the deputy headteacher at the start of the day to get a top-level view of the curriculum. I then met with the members of the history curriculum team to discuss the design and implementation of the history curriculum. Together with you and other leaders, I visited lessons. I also looked at pupils' work and talked to them about it. I met with a group of teachers to discuss how history is taught.

Context

Mayflower Academy is a two-form entry primary school with a nursery. It serves an area of high deprivation and nearly half its pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportions of pupils receiving support for SEND or with an education, health and care plan are higher than the national averages.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive

officer of the multi-academy trust, and the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lee
Her Majesty's Inspector