

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 December 2019

Mr Richard Hopkins
Headteacher
William Ford CofE Junior School
Ford Road
Dagenham
RM10 9JS

Dear Mr Hopkins

Subject inspection of William Ford CofE Junior School

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.

Main findings

You and your staff have made sure that pupils are taught the statutory content set out in the national curriculum for history. Your subject leaders have ensured that the curriculum is sequenced logically and chronologically. This approach equips your pupils with secure knowledge of how the past fits together. Pupils in all classes complete timelines which make clear to them how the period of history they are learning about fits into broader arc of history. Pupils also learn to draw contrasts and make connections between the different periods they study. This helps them remember what they have learned in previous years. Year 6 pupils could tell me how early Islamic civilisation contrasted with Anglo-Saxon England because they learned about this in considerable depth in Year 5.

Curriculum leaders and teachers have very good subject knowledge. Their curriculum planning sets out clearly how each unit of work incorporates disciplinary knowledge. Leaders keep up to date with developments in primary history teaching

by drawing on expertise from professional associations. The subject leader for history could tell me how she had adapted aspects of the history curriculum in response to articles published by experienced history teachers. Teachers work very well together to make sure that pupils in each year group experience the same curriculum. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers demonstrate real enthusiasm for history. They insist that pupils explain their ideas and findings clearly, using standard English and precise subject-specific terminology. They expect pupils to be well behaved and they are. Teachers' high expectations in history are reflected by the range and depth of materials they present to pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils learn about life in the Victorian workhouse by comparing a wide range of evidence including inspectors' reports, floor plans, workhouse timetables and a list of the daily food allowance. This gives them a very rich understanding of conditions in Victorian workhouses. They also learn how workhouses, though repressive and tough, protected some of the most vulnerable people in society from destitution and starvation.

The curriculum gives pupils a healthy regard for historical evidence. Pupils learn to make judgements about the value of different types of evidence in helping them to find out about the past. Younger pupils learn to draw inferences about the Anglo-Saxons from examining photographs of artefacts found at Sutton Hoo. Older pupils learn how historical evidence written from different perspectives can tell us about the attitudes of people who lived in the past. In Year 6, for example, pupils study a map produced in Germany on the eve of the First World War. The map reflects German anxieties at the start of the twentieth century about the growing threat presented by Russia. Having studied the map, one pupil wrote, 'maps and art can help us understand the past because they tell us how people were feeling'.

Expectations of pupils are not as high when it comes to writing. Pupils are rarely expected to write about history in sufficient depth. This restricts pupils' ability to demonstrate how well they have understood the historical content they have been taught. It also limits the validity of teachers' assessments of how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Sometimes pupils are asked to write imaginatively about history rather than respond, in suitable depth, to valid historical questions. This approach undermines the school's intention to build pupils' disciplinary knowledge. It also risks creating misconceptions, for example by suggesting that newspapers were published at the time of the Viking raid on Lindisfarne.

Staff use a system of assessment which aims to quantify with statistical precision the proportion of pupils who are working at the standard they expect in history. However, some of the measures which teachers use to assess pupils in history are very difficult to assess consistently and reliably. Time would be more fruitfully spent scrutinising pupils' work. This would strengthen leaders' understanding of how well their curriculum intentions are being implemented and enable them to assess the impact of the curriculum in developing pupils' substantive and disciplinary

knowledge of history.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the subject leader for history. I also met with a range of pupils and staff. I visited four history lessons and scrutinised the work in pupils' books. I looked at a range of information, including the curriculum plans for history, the subject action plan and records of monitoring and evaluation.

Context

William Ford has three classes in each year group. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is also above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton
Her Majesty's Inspector