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Mrs Louise Brown  
Executive Headteacher  
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Northamptonshire  
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Dear Mrs Brown

### **Subject inspection of Yardley Hastings Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 28 January 2020, 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**

Your evaluation of the strengths and priorities for development in the geography curriculum is reflective and accurate. Geography is currently taught as part of topic work. Leaders recognise that the provision for geography does not yet fully meet the requirements of the national curriculum for key stages 1 and 2. There are plans in place to ensure that the breadth of the national curriculum is covered. For example, leaders are working on developing residential fieldwork in Years 5 and 6 and implementing a topic about the Northampton shoe industry in Years 3 and 4. However, plans are at too early a stage to see their impact for all year groups.

Through your federation arrangement with another local school you are ensuring that the subject leadership for geography is strengthening so that planning is not left to the discretion of individual teachers. The leader with responsibility for

geography has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the geography curriculum.

Leaders and class teachers have made a determined start to reviewing and improving the geography content of pupils' topic work. Staff are working in a collaborative way to achieve this. For example, in key stage 1, staff have successfully implemented a topic unit on locational knowledge. This unit builds well on what pupils have previously learned in Reception, such as the distinctive human features of London. There is much to do, however, to ensure that the school's curriculum for geography is coherently planned for all classes.

Leaders have commenced the implementation of new curriculum schemes for geography since September 2019. These are being reviewed. Currently, the curriculum in key stage 1 is more effective than in key stage 2. This is because the curriculum has been planned collaboratively, utilising the skills of new and experienced staff. At key stage 2, leaders have considered the selection of topic themes and how they link with other subjects, such as history and science. Some of these topics are at a more advanced stage of planning than others. Overall, however, the intent and implementation of the curriculum for geography is at the developmental stage. Leaders' planning is beginning to show greater precision in what pupils need to know and when. You are keen to ensure that pupils learning in geography strengthens rapidly.

In key stage 1, pupils are learning about 'our locality'. This is a new and recently implemented topic. Pupils' classwork demonstrates a carefully planned sequence of work which develops their locational and place knowledge. Teachers use fieldwork in the school grounds and local area purposefully. This equips pupils with the geographical skills they need, such as using simple compass directions and making direct observations of physical and human features. In lessons, a variety of well-resourced activities keeps pupils engaged and focused on their learning. The use of Venn diagrams, for example, has helped pupils compare the human and physical features of the local area with other areas of the UK. As a result, pupils have quickly developed confidence in this aspect of their geographical thinking. However, the retention of pupils' locational knowledge is variable. Not all can confidently identify the four main countries, capital cities and surrounding seas of the United Kingdom.

In key stage 2, pupils' knowledge and skills are not consistently secure. In some topics, the geographical content is a clear and distinctive component of the learning, but this is not always the case. Leaders' current planning focuses more on human geography knowledge and less on physical geography. This is reflected in pupils learning of the 'invaders and settlers' topic. Pupils develop some understanding of concepts such as the reasons for settlement locations and migration. However, their understanding of climate in Scandinavia and the United Kingdom is not used well enough to deepen pupils' understanding of the reasons why Vikings may have invaded the country. This hampers pupils' appreciation and knowledge retention of the physical elements of the geography curriculum. In the 'space' topic, pupils

quickly identified the difference between physical and human features, using satellite photography. They reported that they found this work too easy. Leaders acknowledge that learning was 'filling gaps' in geographical knowledge from weaker provision in the past. In this topic, the links with the national curriculum for geography are tenuous. Leaders have not identified the precise geographical content they wanted pupils to know and understand by the end of the topic.

Leaders ensure that teaching is adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional adult support is effectively deployed to reshape tasks and clear up misconceptions. I saw this in the early years and in Class 1, for example, when specific support was provided for pupils to assist them in learning about basic navigation. Pupils are supported well and feel cared for.

Pupils express their enthusiasm for geography. They have a strong desire to find out more about the world in which they live. Leaders and class teachers are beginning to respond positively to this and are starting to incorporate more opportunities for pupils to learn about global citizenship matters.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and senior leaders, including the curriculum leader for geography. I evaluated the curriculum plans for geography. Together with leaders, I visited lessons in the foundation stage, a mixed Year 1 and 2 class and a mixed Year 5 and 6 class. I looked at a selection of books from the lessons visited with senior leaders. I met with the class teachers from the lessons I had visited. I spoke with two groups of pupils, one from Years 1 and 2 and one from Years 5 and 6. I also spoke with pupils informally during lessons.

## **Context**

Yardley Hastings Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are currently 111 pupils on roll. The school is fully staffed. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

The school is part of a local federation, with another primary school. The executive headteacher oversees both schools. The curriculum leader for geography oversees the provision of this subject across the two schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens

**Her Majesty's Inspector**