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12 February 2020

Mr Stuart Odell  
Headteacher  
Trowse Primary School  
Dell Loke  
Trowse  
Norwich  
NR14 8TH

Dear Mr Odell

### **Subject inspection of Trowse Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 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 previous 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**

Over the past academic year, you have undertaken a thorough review of the school's curriculum. You have further developed your convergent topic approach to teaching the foundation subjects so that learning in individual subjects is more coherently planned and delivered. Leaders responsible for developing the geography curriculum are doing so with knowledgeable enthusiasm. Their high ambitions are woven through plans that demonstrate that the content of the geography curriculum is not diluted. The acquisition of geographical knowledge and skills is the driving force for your chosen topics such as 'rivers', and retains a high profile in others such as 'trailblazers'.

As pupil numbers grow and you prepare to move into new buildings in September 2020, you are making further adaptations to the geography curriculum.

You view this time as an opportunity to add further rigour to how the curriculum is planned and delivered so that pupils more confidently think like geographers. You anticipate that these further amendments will be completed by the end of this academic year.

Teachers understand the importance of teaching geographical knowledge and skills. They know what pupils have covered in previous classes and appreciate what pupils need to know and be able to do by the end of Year 6. Using this information within the framework of your curriculum plans, teachers choose some of the content, such as the settlements and regions, that pupils will study in each class. You have correctly identified that teachers need more guidance in this respect so that there is great rigour and coherence across each key stage; and that your high expectations for pupils' learning in geography are fully realised.

Well-chosen topics combined with teachers' enthusiastic delivery contribute to pupils' keen interest in geography. Pupils speak knowledgeably and confidently about their work. They told me how they are often inspired to follow up their geography work in their own time.

Learning in early years sets the tone. By exploring their immediate environment, children develop their curiosity in the world around them. Children get hands-on experience through activities associated with stories that introduce them to journeys, and differing environments, climates and cultures. Teachers build on this strong grounding through key stages 1 and 2.

Teachers have a suitable knowledge of the subject, and present learning in geography with clarity. Some teachers require pupils to draw on geographical knowledge and skills where they are pertinent to learning in other subjects. For example, in their science work pupils apply their spatial awareness and knowledge of mapwork, distance, longitude and latitude to explore the impact of location on climate. However, this is not yet commonplace. Furthermore, in some topics geographical activities do not demand enough of pupils. They are not routinely expected to draw on their prior learning or personal experiences to show what they know and can do.

You have made sure that adults adapt teaching so that the curriculum is accessible for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Appropriate resources and activities are chosen so that pupils have equal access to the curriculum. This enables pupils with SEND to develop their confidence in applying their knowledge to increasingly complex contexts.

The range of resources reflects the central importance of mapwork in the geography curriculum. Pupils are confident using maps representing physical and human features and those with differing scales and scope, including online mapping and Ordnance Survey maps. In other aspects of geography, there are relatively few resources.

You have plans to review and update the resources available to teachers and pupils, for example in providing pupils with more access to aerial photography, so that they can pose questions of, and draw conclusions from, the information that they contain.

Teachers revisit what pupils have previously learned to check for misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, at the start of a sequence of learning on places in Europe, key stage 2 pupils are given time to reacquaint themselves with previously learned knowledge about the location of countries and regions across the continent. Teachers check on pupils' learning in lessons and when looking back over a sequence of work. They adapt their teaching where pupils are not as secure in the knowledge they need. Teachers do so in a proportionate way and report that this is neither irksome nor onerous.

Geography plays its full part in helping pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Pupils' knowledge of and respect for the environment have been important influences in your construction of the curriculum. Again, this begins in the early years as children learn about recycling and being kind to their environment. Pupils across each key stage develop appropriate awareness of important current issues such as that of climate change.

Teachers make the most of the school's location, being close to urban, rural and coastal areas. Visits to the village, city, Broads and the coast enable pupils to develop and practise their fieldwork skills. For example, drawing on their previous fieldwork experiences, pupils in upper key stage 2 measure river speed, nitrates and pH content during their annual visit to a former quarry which has been redeveloped to a local country park. This allowed pupils to explore the impact of changing land use on the environment.

## **Evidence**

I evaluated the school's curriculum plans, and in particular those relating to the subject of geography. I met with you and with the subject leader for geography and the leader of early years. I met with a group of teachers and support staff, and with a group of pupils. I visited lessons and evaluated work in pupils' books.

## **Context**

Trowse Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged or those with SEND is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is considerably lower than the national 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 Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Lucas  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**