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Miss Jennifer Ainsley
Executive Headteacher
Broomhaugh Church of England First School
Church Lane
Riding Mill
Northumberland
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Dear Miss Ainsley

Subject inspection of Broomhaugh Church of England First School

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 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 understand better the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

When you took up post in April 2019 you conducted an audit of pupils' learning in geography. You noticed that geographic content was not taught as explicitly as you would wish. You suggest that, in part, this was because important geographic content was sometimes 'lost' within the school's topic-based teaching approach or not covered in enough depth for pupils to gain secure geographical knowledge and skills.

Together with your executive deputy headteacher, you continue to undertake a review of the curriculum. This includes a review of how geography is taught across the school. It is very early days in this regard.

The executive deputy headteacher, who is also the subject leader for geography, has thought deeply about what an effective geography curriculum should include. Inspection evidence demonstrates that the school's new schemes of work are sequenced appropriately. They have been introduced very recently. Schemes of

work now include frequent opportunities for pupils to take part in fieldwork in the immediate area and further afield in places, such as Blyth.

Teachers capitalise on pupils' personal interests. For example, pupils will soon be able to learn about life in Kenya, which builds on pupils' earlier work when learning about safari holidays in Africa. This is over and above their studies of regions in the United Kingdom (UK), Europe and South America.

You know the importance of ensuring that pupils are ready for their next steps in education. This is particularly important when pupils from Broomhaugh move to middle school partway through key stage 2. In the past, leaders were unclear whether or not the full national curriculum was being covered between the first and middle schools. At present, leaders have not yet established links with the middle school to identify which aspects of the key stage 2 geography curriculum the two schools will cover. You intend to strengthen partnerships between the two schools so that the curriculum is sequenced well within your school, ensuring that pupils are well prepared to make the transition to middle school.

Pupils' geographical understanding is generally strong. However, our joint inspection activities highlighted some gaps in pupils' basic understanding. For example, some of the Year 3 and 4 pupils I spoke to in class and in formal discussions could not name the capital cities of the UK. Therefore, pupils are not retaining the important geographical knowledge from key stage 1. Furthermore, while pupils' understanding of the geography of Broomhaugh and Riding Mill is sound, some pupils are unaware that the River Tyne flows into the North Sea. Pupils were unable to describe or name upland mountainous regions of the UK despite having been taught this previously.

Some of the resources pupils use are dated or not appropriate for the task in hand. This causes confusion for some pupils and develops misconceptions in their understanding which teachers tackle. Plans are in place to change or supplement geography teaching resources in the future.

Staff say that they have had some curriculum training recently and that this is helping them to better understand the rationale behind the new curriculum plans and schemes of work in geography. Staff also say that they would appreciate some subject-specific training to improve their understanding of geography and skills in the classroom further.

Evidence

I met with you and the executive deputy headteacher with responsibility for the curriculum. I visited lessons in the early years foundation stage and in key stage 2. I spoke to pupils from these lessons about their work in geography. I looked at a selection of pupils' work from the lessons that I visited with the deputy headteacher.

I evaluated the geography curriculum plans and met with teachers to discuss the lesson visits and their approach to the teaching of geography.

Context

Broomhaugh Church of England First School is smaller than the average-sized school. There are currently 65 pupils on roll. The proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals or who have an education, health and care plan are well below average.

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 Northumberland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott

Her Majesty's Inspector