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Mr Paul Lidbury
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Dear Mr Lidbury

Subject inspection of Louth Kidgate Primary Academy

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 better understand the quality of education in specific subjects provided by outstanding primary schools.

Main findings

Pupils at the school are enthusiastic about geography. They have a strong desire to find out more about the world they inhabit. Geography is taught as part of the school's project-based learning. You have a clear vision for the subject and have recently started implementing a new curriculum for geography following the 'Explore, Discover and Create' framework. The subject leader, together with class teachers, has made a determined start to reviewing and improving the quality of pupils' learning in geography. Most of the 'explore' projects delivered in the autumn term have a core focus on geography.

The subject leader has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the curriculum. Staff are working collaboratively to achieve this. They are in the process of ensuring that the scope of the national curriculum is fully covered. The full breadth of the national curriculum is not taught at present.

Children in the early years get off to a very positive start in their understanding of the world around them. Staff plan schemes of learning flexibly, making sure that they take children's interests into account. Vibrant displays stimulate pupils' discovery of the planned themes. Pupils learn about the similarities and differences between places following the explorations of 'Barnaby the bear.' Through this approach, children learn about time differences and seasonal changes between the United Kingdom and Australia, for example. Learning activities promote children's independent thinking and their willingness to share their thoughts and ideas. The curriculum in the early years makes strong connections with children's understanding of their local area. For example, they learn about how apples grow and experience the harvesting of apples and the baking of apple pies in their community. This enables children to have an early understanding about how food is sourced.

Teachers typically have good subject knowledge and they use this enthusiastically. Through their questioning and resources they promote the use of subject-specific terms well. With the help of additional adults, teachers adapt their approach for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those who require more support.

Leaders make effective use of the local area in key stages 1 and 2. You are determined to ensure that opportunities for fieldwork and wider visits enrich the geography curriculum. In Year 5, for example, leaders have utilised the expertise of a local specialist to devise a project about rivers and the 'legacy' of the River Lud. Leaders have identified precisely the key geographical knowledge that pupils need to help them understand how rivers change from their source, why they flood and how people's dependence on the river and canal has changed over time. Similarly, fieldwork opportunities in key stage 1 and the early years help pupils to recognise the human and physical features of their local area.

In both key stages 1 and 2, the planning of some schemes of learning in geography are at a more advanced stage than others. In key stage 2, leaders have considered the selection of project themes and cross-curricular links. In Year 6, for example, pupils can describe the historical spread of the bubonic plague on both a global and local scale using their mapwork skills. In Year 2, pupils can identify the distinctive physical and human features of independently researched holiday destinations. However, in other schemes the geographical content is less clear. This is because the links between subjects are either tenuous or the geographical content is not well planned. Leaders have identified the core knowledge they want pupils to understand by the end of each project but acknowledge that the implementation of this content is in the developmental stage. In key stage 1, pupils had trouble recognising the distinctive human and physical features of India, for example, as part of their project on inspirational icons in the 1960s. In key stage 2, pupils had learned about volcanoes as part of their project on 'Radical Romans'. However, they had little recollection about why volcanoes erupt. Pupils are keen to find out more,

but as one pupil put it, 'I know about volcanoes because I find out about them in my own time.'

There is more to do to ensure that leaders' intent for geography matches the ambition of the national curriculum. Planning does not consistently enable pupils to develop an in-depth understanding of place knowledge in key stage 2. Project themes do not clearly enable pupils to identify the similarities and differences between regions in the UK and North America or Europe, for example.

Leaders have introduced new approaches to assessment across all year groups to help pupils know and remember more of the geography they have studied. It is too soon to see the impact of these strategies. Presently, too many pupils in key stage 1 are unable to name the four countries of the UK, capital cities and surrounding seas. In key stage 2, pupils are unable to accurately locate and name the world's continents, major cities and oceans.

Leaders and class teachers recognise that the new curriculum plans are at a developmental stage and, therefore, it is too soon to assess their impact. You are keen that provision for geography strengthens further as the implementation of the school's new curriculum continues to evolve. The numerous displays around the school site reflect the growing importance being placed on this subject.

Evidence

During the inspection I met with you, your deputy headteacher and the subject leader for geography. I evaluated the curriculum plans for geography. Together with the subject leader, I visited lessons in the foundation stage and in Years 2, 4 and 6. I looked at a selection of books from the lessons visited with the subject leader. I also looked at a small sample of pupils' work from other year groups. I met with the class teachers from the lessons I had visited and the leader for the Reception class. I spoke with three groups of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6. I also spoke with pupils informally during lessons.

Context

Louth Kidgate Primary Academy is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. There are currently 417 pupils on roll. The school is fully staffed. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector