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Mr Nic George
Head of School
Seaton Primary School
Valley View
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Dear Mr George

Subject inspection of Seaton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 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. This inspection focused on the quality of education in history.

Main findings

You and your staff have set out to construct a coherent curriculum that spans Reception to Year 6. You seek to build a secure foundation of chronological understanding in British history up to 1066 by the end of Year 4, before bringing in more non-British aspects, particularly in upper key stage 2. The school aims to have a broad curriculum, but it is not clear that this will consistently meet the requirements of the national curriculum. For example, in key stage 2, the school covers more than one aspect of British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066. To this end, your curriculum covers the Normans and the Second World War. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this ambition, the curriculum, as currently organised, runs the risk of squeezing out some of the non-

British aspects of the national curriculum that are compulsory in a maintained school. Leaders' processes to assure themselves that the school meets the requirements of the national curriculum are not as clear as they need to be.

The leader for history is a subject specialist and brings an understanding of history as a discipline to the school's planning. Teachers are enthusiastic about history and show good levels of appropriate subject knowledge. They sequence learning well, which helps pupils to learn more and remember more. For example, pupils in Year 3 can confidently use the terms 'Palaeolithic', 'Mesolithic' and 'Neolithic'. Moreover, they can explain the similarities and differences between these periods of the Stone Age. Pupils in Year 5 can identify different causes that contributed to the outbreak of the Second World War.

Aspects of disciplinary knowledge are introduced to pupils early in their school careers. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about the concept of significance when they answer the question 'Why was Neil Armstrong significant?' The school-wide focus on developing pupils' confidence in using technical vocabulary is clearly paying off and can be seen in the way pupils use historical terms well in discussion. Teachers have high expectations in this area and are not frightened of using complex technical language when it is required.

However, the written work that pupils complete is not always well chosen to support the schools' ambitious curricular goals. Some of it runs the risk of anachronism or inviting non-historical responses.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully involved in the history curriculum, which is as equally ambitious for them as it is for other pupils. All staff are clear about this, with many voicing the opinion that studying history can be a really positive experience for some pupils with SEND who might find other aspects of the school curriculum more difficult.

You and your staff are clearly committed to the value of studying history and history also plays a significant role in the wider curriculum, contributing well to pupils' personal development. Trips are a key part of life at Seaton Primary School, and many have a strong history content. For example, pupils learn about Anglo-Saxon life at a residential visit to a reconstructed medieval village. They learn about the Second World War when they visit the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, which is an important aspect of local history too.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other school leaders. I visited lessons jointly with you and talked to teachers. I talked to pupils about their experiences of learning history and looked at their work.

Context

Seaton Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is currently part of the Axe Beacon Federation. The proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average. The same is true for pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lee

Her Majesty's Inspector