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Mrs C Truslove
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Truslove

Subject inspection of East Haddon C of E Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 March 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 looked at geography.

Main findings

You have a clear vision for the teaching of geography at your school, based on a reflective and accurate evaluation of current strengths and priorities for development. Geography is mostly taught as part of the school's project-based approach, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. Together with all staff in this small school, you have recently started to review and implement a new curriculum for geography which is closely aligned to the requirements of the national curriculum. Staff value the collaborative approach you have nurtured to achieve your vision for an ambitious geography curriculum. Although in their infancy, links have been established with a cluster of primary schools and one secondary school to draw on local expertise.

You are in the process of ensuring that the scope of the national curriculum is fully covered. The curriculum in key stage 1 builds on what children have learned in the early years. Similarly, the curriculum in key stage 2 mostly builds on what pupils have learned in key stage 1. However, currently, the full national curriculum is not taught. There is more to do to ensure that leaders' intentions for geography match the ambition of the national curriculum. There are some important weaknesses in the identification and development of place knowledge in key stages 1 and 2. For example, project themes do not consistently enable pupils to understand the similarities and differences between regions in the UK and a contrasting non-European country, in key stage 1, or a European country, in key stage 2. The quality of pupils' work in their study of the Alps, for example, showed that this topic does not help pupils to understand how to compare specific places in enough detail.

Teachers have good subject knowledge which they apply enthusiastically. Through effective questioning and use of resources, they stimulate pupils' interest in geography. With the help of additional adults, teachers adapt their approach for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or for those who require more support. Pupils' ability to recall their geographical knowledge, however, is variable. Too many pupils in key stages 1 and 2 cannot accurately recall the four main countries, capital cities and surrounding seas of the United Kingdom. In key stage 2, pupils' recall of European and global countries and capital cities was stronger than that of the United Kingdom.

Children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 are excited to learn about the world around them. Teachers' high expectations and careful planning ensure that all pupils in this mixed-age class can access the curriculum and aim high. Staff make effective use of the local area. Local fieldwork at 'Holdenby muddy education', for example, has been purposefully incorporated into the schemes of learning. Pupils were highly enthused by their 'dinosaur trail'. The development of map-work skills, orientation and use of direction were thoughtfully incorporated into pupils' memorable learning experiences. Pupils also developed their observational skills, recognising seasonal change and key landmarks. As one pupil said, 'This is the best day ever!' Pupils' learning is also enriched by their involvement in growing potatoes and other vegetables in the school's allotment. For example, in completing 'potato diaries', pupils learn how the changes between seasons affect plant growth.

In key stages 1 and 2, some elements of geography planning are at a more advanced stage than others. In key stage 2, leaders have considered the selection of project themes and cross-curricular links. This was evident in the mixed Year 4, 5 and 6 class. Pupils were able to draw on their geographical knowledge to explain how physical features of Greece influenced how the ancient Greeks lived. They used different sources of evidence to describe and explain how island geography, climate and topography were important considerations. Pupils were also confident in using technical subject terminology, such as 'terrain' and 'plateau', when explaining the location of settlement buildings. In the mixed Year 2 and 3 class, pupils could recall the location of their school and village using a range of maps and aerial

photographs. Pupils are developing their geographical skills through a carefully sequenced series of lessons about the local area. However, in other project themes, the sequencing of geographical knowledge is much less clear because the core geographical content has not been precisely planned. In key stage 2, pupils' learning about volcanoes and earthquakes is limited, for example. This hampers pupils' appreciation and understanding of physical geography.

You are keen to ensure that the provision for geography strengthens further as the school's curriculum continues to evolve. This includes introducing new approaches to fieldwork in key stage 2 to ensure that pupils' skills in measuring and recording observations build more effectively on pupils' learning from key stage 1. Pupils consistently expressed their enthusiasm for geography. They are inquisitive and have a strong desire to find out more about the world they inhabit. This is reflected in pupils' 'where in the world' presentations about a wide range of historical and contemporary themes and issues, which pupils independently research. Their enthusiasm and caring natures are also reflected in their willingness to raise funds to support people affected by geographical tragedies such as flooding and the recent Australian bush fires. These examples serve to illustrate where geography has had a positive impact on pupils' learning beyond the national curriculum.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and the school's nominated leader for geography. I evaluated the curriculum plans for geography. Together, we visited two lessons with mixed-age pupils in key stages 1 and 2. We also joined Reception children and Year 1 pupils during their fieldwork study of the local area. I looked at a selection of pupils' books from the lessons visited, with class teachers. I met with the class teachers and the leader for the early years. I spoke with three groups of pupils drawn from Year 2 and Years 4, 5 and 6. I also spoke with pupils informally during lessons.

Context

East Haddon Church of England Primary School is a much smaller-than-average sized primary school. There are currently 88 pupils on roll in one of three mixed-age and mixed-key stage classes. The school is fully staffed. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below 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 Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens

Her Majesty's Inspector