

22 September 2006

Mrs Martin and Mr Barrs
Headteachers
Anglo European School
Willow Green
Ingatestone
Essex
CM4 0DJ

Dear Mrs Martin and Mr Barrs

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on the 20 and 21 September 2006 to look at work in history

The visit provided valuable information that will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and Standards

- Achievement and standards in history are good. Attainment at the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is above average in history. In particular, GCSE results have often been well above the national average despite the fact that you enter a large number of students. Progress in history throughout the school is good.
- Attitudes towards history are very positive as shown by the number of students choosing to study it at GCSE, in the sixth form and at university. Students say that they enjoy lessons and find the study of history valuable. Some groups did not settle quickly enough and low-level chatter disrupted some classes.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in history is good.

- Teaching is good overall. All teachers have very good subject knowledge, form good relationships with students and make effective use of a wide range of strategies including role- play and collaborative group work. Students are encouraged to work independently and cooperatively.
- Students with learning difficulties are taught well and all lessons show a good focus on differentiation.
- Some lessons started slowly and teachers did not make their expectation of student behaviour clear enough.
- Assessment procedures are good and are well understood by students. Questioning in class is particularly effective and marking is consistent and provides helpful feedback to students.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The department provides a broad and balanced curriculum while at the same time supporting students well in literacy and citizenship. Particular strengths of the curriculum include the links with languages and the history element in the range of European visits.
- Examination courses have been well chosen and match the interests of students well.
- The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is already focussing on major themes which link with citizenship and the international dimension within the school but there is little use of local examples to support learning.

Care and guidance

Care and guidance is good.

- The department provides a very safe and interesting learning environment for students.
- Assessment is well managed and rigorous and supports learning well at all levels.
- Students are given clear guidance about progression into examination courses and about how to fulfil their potential in the subject.
- Students' ideas are responded to – for example about setting arrangement and option choices.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are good.

- The head of department is very experienced and has improved on provision since the last inspection. The subject has a high profile in the school.
- The department works well together and new and trainee teachers are supported very well.
- Formal monitoring of teaching and learning is effective although opportunities for continuing professional development outside of school have been limited.

Special Focus: Literacy

Standards of speaking and listening are generally high because teachers make good use of strategies to encourage students to express their views and to work in small groups. Discussion and role-play are regular elements in lessons. Writing skills are fostered very well through a variety of tasks and much of the written work of higher attaining students is really impressive. Reading and research skills are also developed well but students do not have enough opportunities to use computers in the classroom.

Inclusion

All groups of students make good progress. The department successfully caters for those with learning difficulties and disabilities by providing smaller class sizes and extra support within the setting structure. Higher attaining students flourish because of the challenging lessons and opportunities for debate. Individuals in Year 9 and Year 11 are clearly working at the highest level.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the advantage of:

- reviewing procedures at the beginning of lessons to ensure that all available time is utilized
- extending the use of ICT in lessons
- introducing changes in curriculum at Key Stage 3 to include some local studies.

As I explained in my previous letter a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's web site. It will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Matthews
Additional Inspector