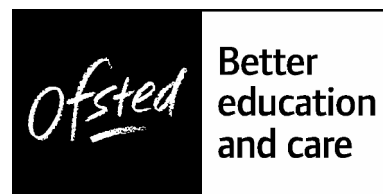


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Miss V Hall  
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Dear Miss Hall

### Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme - History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during the visit I made on 16 October to look at work in history.

The visit provided valuable information which 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.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit, to support development in history. This follows. 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

- In relation to both subject knowledge and the acquisition of relevant historical skills, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are broadly average and pupils' achievement is good.
- From the moment they enter school, pupils have many opportunities to develop their historical skills and children in the Foundation Stage are

beginning to use descriptive vocabulary to compare artefacts and to decide how old they are.

- In Key Stage 1, pupils talk convincingly about a range of toys they examine and, by using computers and other source material, deduce quite accurately when they were made.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils are fully aware of the skills they need to make decisions about the past. They also give quite detailed information about a variety of periods in history, from the contents of Tutankhamen's burial chamber to the home front during the Second World War. They are adept at questioning the sources available to them but their skills in chronology are variable.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy their history lessons, speak highly of their teachers and are more than willing to make contributions in class. They behave well, work maturely together and readily support each other in pairs and groups.

#### Quality of teaching and learning

- Teaching and learning are good overall and there are examples of outstanding practice. Classroom management and relationships are good. Teachers foster pupils' literacy skills well and the emphasis on speaking and listening is a major feature of lessons in all key stages. Pupils themselves comment that they are encouraged to question each other and also the sources available to them. In the lessons observed, pupils were desperate to make contributions and justified their views with skill and verve.
- Teachers enjoy history, have a secure knowledge of the subject and pass on their enthusiasm to the pupils. There is a good balance between subject content and the development of specific historical skills.
- Chronological understanding is fostered from an early age and pupils are delighted to handle the many artefacts in lessons. Older pupils are beginning to approach the interpretation of source material with confidence and the Second World War project gives them a wealth of opportunities to question some of the evidence placed before them.
- Ongoing assessment in class is good and teachers know their pupils well. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and varies from detailed advice on how pupils may improve their work to little more than cursory comment.

## Quality of the curriculum

- History has a high profile within the school and pupils benefit from a wide variety of links between history and their learning in other subjects. For example, all genres of writing are covered in history lessons and pupils complete impressive diaries on the travels of Shackleton as a result. They also use computers to produce assignments on the work they are covering.
- The curriculum is, therefore, good and is enhanced by the wide range of historical visits, to Manchester Egyptian Museum, for example.

## Leadership and management of history

- Leadership and management are good and the subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for future development in history. She ensures that the subject plays a major part in developing her pupils' literacy and has planned a curriculum which comprises a good balance between content and the acquisition of historical skills. She leads by example and her teaching demonstrates good practice.
- She is well aware of the quality of provision within history but recognises, too, that the monitoring of teaching and learning is irregular and that more formal strategies for lesson observation and the sharing of assessment practice are now needed if improvement is to be maintained. Teachers prepare well for their lessons but would now benefit from more subject-specific in-service training.

## Inclusion

All groups of pupils achieve well in history because teachers and teaching assistants are concerned to involve everyone in what the subject and the teaching has to offer. Guided reading and writing groups, under the auspices of teaching assistants, are a strong feature and lower-attaining pupils are able to access the full history curriculum as a result. The 'two stars and a wish' system of learning outcomes is effective in guiding all pupils to success and challenges the more able to think more deeply about the subject-matter, to produce even higher standards of work.

## Literacy

The history curriculum and history teaching make a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Speaking and listening are fostered well. From the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are encouraged to discuss with their

classmates and have every opportunity to listen to what others have to say. Questioning skills are well developed and pupils have the confidence to challenge the views of their teachers too! Teachers insist that their pupils give reasons for their answers and, as a result, pupils justify their opinions both orally and in writing, with a skill which often belies their years.

#### Overall effectiveness of the subject

Provision in history is good overall. Pupils and teachers enjoy the subject and are enthusiastic about the topics they study together. Links with other areas enhance pupils' skills in literacy and ICT in particular. Teaching and the curriculum are good and develop pupils' interest in the subject and also the skills they need to act as young historians. The area is led and managed well and the school is now looking to formalise monitoring procedures and to introduce new methods to assess pupils' work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the quality and use of assessment to plan teaching and learning and to raise standards
- more formal monitoring of teaching and learning in order to share good practice across the subject
- researching the possibility of staff attending more in-service training in relation to the teaching of history.

Thank you once again for your kindness during my visit. I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop history in the school.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd  
Additional Inspector