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Mr I Crabtree
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Dear Mr Crabtree

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, pupils, parents and chair of governors, during my visit on 02 November to look at work in ESD.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: discussions with pupils, teachers, parents and the chair of the governing body; scrutiny of relevant documentation; visits to classrooms to talk to pupils; an observation of a whole-school assembly; and an analysis of some pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of ESD was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' standards and achievement in ESD are good.

- Pupils have a very good understanding of how the choices they make may have consequences for others, that rights also often carry responsibilities, and of the difference between needs and wants. This was demonstrated well through my discussions with pupils, following an assembly, about the boxes of toys and other items sent to children in different parts of the world. They showed that they can relate this understanding of needs and wants to their own circumstances and to broader contexts.

- Pupils are able to give good examples of what is meant by sustainability; for example, the need to reduce, re-use and recycle materials. They can explain this through the recycling that is done in the school, what happens to waste from their own homes and the use of recycling centres in the local community.
- The school develops well the key skills and attitudes pupils require to underpin their understanding of ESD; for example, decision making skills, balancing evidence and opinions, and considering the needs and rights of others. This arises naturally from the ethos of the school and its approach to teaching and learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding, for their age, of quite complex issues that relate to ESD; for example they can discuss the environmental impact of importing food and balance this against the livelihoods of those growing this food.

Quality of teaching and learning

No overall judgement is made on the overall quality of teaching and learning as no observation of teaching took place. The scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils contributed to the judgement on their understanding of ESD issues.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good overall.

- The school covers ESD issues well in key curriculum areas; for example, geography, science, and design and technology provide good opportunities for pupils to develop relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. These are underpinned well by work in PSHE. However, this is not co-ordinated well.
- Excellent use is made of the local and wider environment as a context for learning. There is very good progression from using the school, to the local and wider environment, and to global issues as pupils move through the classes.
- A school undertakes a wide range of other activities that make very good contributions to ESD; for example, the Fair Trade fortnight, Africa week and work with the Forest Schools initiative.
- Very good use is made of the school grounds; for example, the excellent environmental area and through the work of the gardening club. The involvement of pupils in caring for the grounds is excellent. The school building is used well to teach pupils about sustainability, such as by reducing energy consumption with pupils acting as 'computer' or 'lights monitors'.
- The school is outward looking; the e-links with schools around Europe and elsewhere, and links with schools in India and Africa, are used well to enrich the curriculum.

- The school offers an impressive range of very well-attended extra-curricular activities – these also contribute well to developing the attitudes that underpin ESD.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management are good overall.

- The school is clear about where it is and what needs to be done in ESD and recognises the need for better co-ordination of the curriculum, and related activities, to ensure that pupils' experiences are both complementary and ensure progression. The wide range of good activities taking place is managed very well, but lacks this co-ordination.
- There is good involvement of pupils in decision making. The School Council has a clearly defined role and the power to make decisions. Several ESD related issues have been discussed, such as the school's travel plan and having regular walk-to-school days.
- The school's ethos and philosophy support work in ESD extremely well and ensure that pupils are very well equipped for ESD. The school works hard and successfully to develop the pupils as active citizens. For example, older pupils provide excellent care and support for younger pupils through acting as mentors and through other activities.
- The school is very well placed to further improve provision for ESD.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- Hambridge is a happy and close-knit school community. There is great respect and support for each other, particularly in older pupils supporting younger ones.
- Very good attention is given to the needs of all pupils.
- There is little cultural diversity in the school and the school works hard to compensate for this through its links with schools overseas, through projects such as the Africa week and developing links with the Garrison School in Ghana.
- All pupils are given the care, support and guidance required to make good progress.

Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- develop a clear overall framework to co-ordinate the school's approach to ESD and to ensure that pupils' experiences are complementary and lead to progression in their understanding

- establish a set of principles of ESD to inform the school's self-evaluation.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD in the school.

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 website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector