

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6644  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mrs J Renou  
Headteacher  
Skipton Girls High School  
Gargrave Road  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 1QL

Dear Mrs Renou

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 and 04 October to look at work in geography.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the global dimension in geography.

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 interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Standards and achievement are good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good at A and AS level. Both the higher and lower attainers have the potential to achieve even better. Pupils have particularly good locational knowledge.
- Pupils have good opportunities for social and moral development and understand the importance of the topical nature of geography in the

news. However, in Key Stages 3 and 4, they do not all have the confidence to articulate their views and participate in debate.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in geography is good.

- All teachers are very enthusiastic geographers with good subject knowledge.
- Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very positive and the teachers provide good individual interventions to support learning.
- Lessons are well organised and time is well managed so that behaviour is always excellent.
- Lessons do not regularly include sufficient visual and active learning opportunities to meet the needs of all the pupils.
- Readily available previous attainment information is not used effectively to meet the individual needs of pupils in lessons. Assessment information is not shared with pupils on a regular basis and questions are not targeted to match individual expectations.
- Learning outcomes are not made sufficiently explicit so that all the pupils understand what needs to be achieved by the end of the lesson.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall.

- Good emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of examination requirements, interpreting the specifications and preparing pupils for their next phase of work or education.
- There is evidence within the schemes of work of an increasing amount of choice being given to pupils to meet their preferences and interests, increase creativity and promote enjoyment.
- The field work programme does not meet the expected entitlement in each year. Although visits are undertaken within the region and abroad, insufficient use is made of the school grounds and the outstanding landscapes in the local area to promote enthusiasm for the subject.
- Schemes of work do not give sufficient consideration to the development of geographical skills and transferable key skills such as speaking and listening and problem solving.

### Leadership and management of geography

Leadership and management of geography are satisfactory.

- There are good opportunities to share good practice within the department. Geography has a high status within the school and the subject leader drives through developments in an informal way, since

leadership and management are organised within a humanities faculty.

- There is good analysis of standards through the scrutiny of test and examination results and appropriate interventions ensure that targets are largely achieved.
- The monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning and efforts to seek the views of pupils and their parents are in the early stages of development.
- There are few strategies to evaluate the impact of new initiatives on standards, achievement and personal development.

Subject issue: the global dimension

Pupils' learning about the global dimension is good.

- There are good links to the wider world through Fair Trade initiatives, the wide range of visits and visitors to the school generally and the developing links with other partners.
- In geography there are specific links through the curriculum topics chosen and through workshops for post-16 pupils. There is a clear focus on education for sustainable development throughout all aspects of the geography curriculum.
- Pupils have insufficient awareness of their place in Britain as part of a multicultural society.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- Pupils receive very good one to one support to help ensure that they achieve challenging targets. No groups underachieve.
- Although the department examines individual rates of progress it does not analyse data sufficiently rigorously. Potential differences in achievement are not identified by ethnicity, length of time in the school nor are they linked to previous attainment.

Areas for improvement

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

- continue to develop the range of teaching and learning styles being used and the opportunities for pupils to enhance their speaking and listening skills
- make more active use of assessment information about individual pupils
- ensure that the entitlement to fieldwork is fully met
- check that new initiatives have a positive impact on standards achievement and personal development in geography.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop geography 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

Sonya Williamson  
Her Majesty's Inspector