

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



28 February 2007

Mr M Saxby  
Headteacher  
Western Downland Cof E Aided Primary School  
Rockbourne  
Fordingbridge  
Hampshire  
SP6 3NA

Dear Mr Saxby

Ofsted survey inspection programme - Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 17 January 2007 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 emphasis placed on the global dimension of the subject.

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 the headteacher and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography was judged to be good with a number of outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Most pupils arrive at the school with skills and abilities that are a little above average for their age, by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in comparison with the national expectation.

- Pupils make good progress in their understanding of geographical concepts and themes as they progress through the school. In particular, they have a good knowledge of the local area and the processes that create features of a river. These build on good foundations in the Reception Year and Year 1.
- Pupils were interested in their work, applied themselves well to the tasks set and engaged readily with each other on paired and group activities.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge, outstanding lesson planning and effective use of questioning techniques enhanced the quality of geography lessons.
- A growing use of new technologies (inter-active white boards) aids the quality of pupils' learning.
- A good range of resources is used, especially to support local area work. This was exemplified when a local cartographer helped pupils with a mapping exercise in Year 2.
- Pupils' work is mostly correctly assessed against the National Curriculum levels. However, sometimes levels are inappropriately given where pupils have copied work directly from the internet and not utilised it to tell the event in their own words.
- An excellent planning project has been set up in Years 1 and 2 with local parish planners. Pupils were learning a great deal from this activity, which was also supporting pupils' understanding of neighbourhood democracy. It also provided 'food for thought' for the local planners about how much children's views can be positively taken into account when planning decisions are made.
- Pupils' learning is good. For example, pupils in Year 5 had effectively collected and interpreted data on Bournemouth in order to understand leisure facilities for family holidays.
- An excellent range of fieldwork and excursions are organised, including a trip to Bournemouth and one to Sparsholt Agricultural College. Here pupils developed a very keen awareness of the need for recycling and used their own packed lunches to assess their impact on the environment.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- An excellent document has been drawn up to identify where progression in ideas and concepts might be applied but this is not yet reflected in all the geography topics.
- Outstanding schemes of work guide the teaching, which identify key vocabulary to be learnt and ensures that an enquiry-based approach is taken in many topics.
- The study of other parts of the world is less well covered than the local area.

- The range and type of fieldwork is extensive and includes visits to Hengistbury Head and a residential trip to Wales. Health and safety issues are addressed well when planning fieldwork.

## Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- The senior members of staff managing the curriculum on this split site school do so very effectively. They work very well in partnership.
- An outstanding geography policy guides the work in this subject and addresses well the issues of Every Child Matters.
- Excellent understanding of monitoring and evaluation ensures that teachers are well informed and keep track of the progress pupils are making.
- An appropriate action plan has been drawn up for 2006-2007.
- Parents are kept informed each half term through an excellent curriculum newsletter from each year group. This provides good feedback to parents, for example, in a recent edition, parents were asked to help ensure that all children knew their home addresses. It had been apparent in a local area study that this was not the case.
- It is to be commended that governors have played an active part in deciding whether 'best value' was achieved for a particular school visit to Fishbourne.

## Subject issue: The global dimension

- A productive link has been formed with Layibi School in Uganda. This is expanding pupils' horizons and their understanding of other cultures and ways of life. Considerable potential exists in this link to expand the topic to demonstrate inter-dependence and sustainability on a global scale.

## Inclusion

- Good attention is paid to ensuring all pupils are catered for and work is provided that is suitably challenging for all.

## Areas for improvement

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

- consider developing a broader global dimension to the curriculum, especially for older pupils, by expanding the study of Layibi school and its surrounding area in Uganda
- ensure that all topics have appropriate progression in the knowledge, skills and concepts when geographical topics are taught.

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

Jenny Smith  
Her Majesty's Inspector