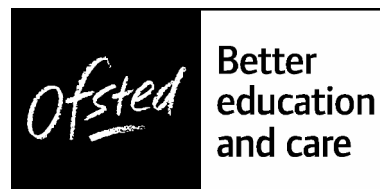


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 0207 4216855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Grimshaw
Headteacher
Audley Community Infant School
Queen's Park Road
Blackburn
BB1 2SE

Dear Mrs Grimshaw

Ofsted Subject Inspection Programme 2006/7 – Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 05 February 2007 to look at work in geography.

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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is good although standards remain low.

- Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average but by the end of Key Stage 1 their standards are only just below those expected nationally so this represents good achievement.
- Pupils have a growing understanding of the importance of expressing their opinions. They can plan journeys, are aware of landmarks and are developing good skills in direction finding. They have only limited

awareness of environmental issues. This is because coverage of the programme of study for geography is not formally monitored.

- Pupils are achieving well in geography as a result of the strong focus on speaking and listening skills.
- The overall personal development and well being of pupils is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory mainly due to the extended holidays that some pupils take. Attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils behave well and stay on task as a result of teachers' high expectations. Pupils show clear enjoyment of their learning.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in geography is satisfactory.

- Teachers use a good variety of teaching and learning strategies, particularly role play and practical activities. Teaching is responsive to pupils' preferred learning styles. The pace is good since teachers manage transitions well.
- Teachers are very effective managers of the learning environment.
- Planning is well focused through key questions and well phrased learning objectives which are shared with pupils. However, planning does not include assessment opportunities and does not plan for differentiation other than through pupils' different levels of response to the tasks set.
- Although writing is modelled to support pupils' learning, there is insufficient emphasis on new geographical vocabulary.
- A good range of resources is used in lessons but the range of geography specific resources available for teachers to include in their plans is more limited.
- A range of support staff make effective inputs to support pupils' learning and contribute to teaching.
- The quality of assessment in geography is inadequate. In the reception class there is good tracking of the progress that pupils make with their knowledge and understanding of the world. In Key Stage 1, although teachers assess learning informally through questioning and observations of pupils, there is no formal monitoring of progress. There is no indication whether pupils are working at national expectations or whether they are receiving appropriate levels of challenge or support.
- Pupils receive good oral feedback on the quality of their work through one to one discussions with their teachers.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is not formally planned and monitored to ensure coverage or to identify the adequacy of time allocations.

- Pupils have a good range of experiences of learning outside the classroom. The teachers make good use of the school grounds and the local neighbourhood to develop fieldwork skills. Visit to sites further away, such as a country park, help pupils to understand contrasting environments.
- Curriculum activities are well matched to pupils' social, emotional and intellectual needs. Independent work is encouraged but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for geographical enquiry.

Subject leadership and management

Geography leadership and management are inadequate.

- The school does not have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of its provision for geography. There are no formal procedures through which the co-ordinator can gather assessment information to identify trends, monitor the quality of teaching and learning or evaluate teachers' resource and professional development needs.
- The current development plan is appropriately focused on checking whether curriculum requirements are met within the new topic structure but there is insufficient emphasis on how the quality of provision might be evaluated.
- The co-ordinator has the capacity to make the improvements needed if relevant support for the leadership and management of the subject were to be made available.

Subject issue: the global dimension

Pupils' learning about the global dimension is good.

- Pupils have good knowledge of a range of distant places. They understand some simple differences between their home environment and that of distant countries such as India and Pakistan.
- When pupils take extended holidays abroad they are given learning packs to encourage them to take photographs and record their experiences through drawing and writing. When pupils complete the work it is shared with other pupils and contributes to their geographical understanding.
- There are excellent opportunities through the link with a school in Pakistan to raise pupils' awareness of the global dimension.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- There are no apparent discrepancies in the achievement of different groups of pupils in geography lessons.

- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good individual and group support.
- Teachers do not regularly plan differentiated approaches to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate challenge and support.

Areas for improvement

We discussed areas for development that the school may wish to consider, including:

- promoting procedures for subject self-evaluation, leadership and management
- ensuring that the curriculum meets statutory requirements
- developing assessment practices in geography
- extending the range of geography resources.

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

As I explained, 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 of Schools