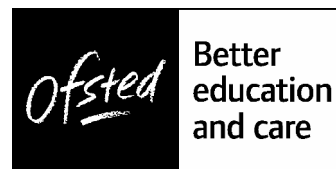


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26 February 2007

Mrs V Lucas
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lucas

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on the 08 February 2007 to look at work in history.

The visit provided valuable information that 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 lessons.

History

The overall effectiveness of history is judged to be good.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards of pupils in history are good overall.

- Attainment on entry to the school has been average but has declined to below average in the last two years.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average in pupil's ability to write about history but above average in their knowledge and understanding. Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 2.

- Pupils in Year 6 show very good knowledge and understanding and very good research skills. Individuals produce pieces of extended writing that are of an unusually high standard.
- Many pupils show real understanding of the motives of people in the past; for example, in understanding the different reasons for views about child labour in mines and factories.
- Attitudes towards history are outstanding. Pupils take real responsibility for their own learning in Year 6 as illustrated in the very well researched role play activities on the work of Dr Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in history is good.

- Teaching was good in both lessons observed. Both had outstanding features particularly in the use of resources.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they make learning interesting and fun. I particularly appreciated the learning through play that I observed in Year 1.
- Pupils are given lots of opportunities to work independently and in groups. Planning for the different levels of ability is good and pupils with the highest potential are clearly being given really challenging tasks.
- Teachers are good at ensuring that pupils develop history skills and ICT is used exceptionally well by teachers and pupils.
- Work is marked carefully and pupils really value the wide range of visits and visitors to history classes.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum covers the National Curriculum and is enriched with a very good range of visits and other activities.
- Cross – curricular links and a focus on literacy and ICT work in history are very effective.
- To improve the curriculum further and to support the Every Child Matters agenda, it needs reviewing to ensure that it is as helpful as possible to pupils by focussing on issues and themes that will help them understand the background to the world in which they live.

Care and guidance

Care and guidance are good.

- Teachers and support staff provide a very good quality of care and pupils feel confident and know that their ideas are valued.

- Great care is taken in planning the range of trips, visits and residential activities.
- At present assessment procedures are satisfactory. Planned collaboration with other schools should result in the establishment of more formal procedures. Some opportunities for self- assessment are already being used.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are good.

- Senior leadership is very supportive of work in history and has made a major contribution to all aspects of development particularly through the learning partnerships with other schools.
- The recently appointed co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how to take the subject forward but has yet to complete a full review or observe teaching in history.
- The development of a team approach to subject leadership and the use of ICT resources has proved very effective.
- There is a very good understanding of the issues influencing effective transition between Key Stages 2 and 3. The skills and knowledge achieved by pupils in history are being made clear to the secondary schools to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Literacy

Standards in all aspects of literacy are good. Pupils discuss issues and play a leading role in lessons and they are very confident in expressing their views. Many of them read widely and enjoy books that support their work in history. Writing skills are developed very well because teachers use opportunities for extended writing and for writing for a range of purposes and audiences.

Inclusion

The ethos of the school is one of inclusion and of valuing individuals. Support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good and they participate fully part in the subject. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are offered extra challenge through a range of activities and lesson planning clearly takes their needs into account.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed are:

- the development of assessment procedures and target setting
- a review of the curriculum in the context of the Every Child Matters agenda to ensure that it meets, fully, the needs of all pupils.

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 web site. It will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Matthews
Additional Inspector