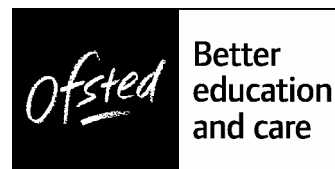


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24 November 2006

Mr M Hammond
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hammond

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during our visit on the 08 and 09 November to look at work in history.

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

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 you and the assistant headteacher, discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and the observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

- Standards in history are above national average.
- The achievement of pupils is good.
- Pupils in Year 2 display a good knowledge and understanding of the history topic they are studying.
- Pupils are developing an understanding of chronology and can explain timelines. For example, they show an enthusiastic interest in the history of space travel. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are highly motivated by

their work and make excellent progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding.

- Pupils apply skills from other subjects appropriately, for example by accessing web sites to research the first landing on the moon.
- Gifted and talented pupils work hard to understand a challenging historical text.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are outstanding.
- However, pupils do not have many opportunities to demonstrate their achievement in historical enquiry and interpretation.

Quality of teaching and learning of history

- The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good, with some outstanding features.
- Planning of lessons is detailed and clearly linked to learning objectives. Lessons are characterised by good relationships which contribute well to the stimulating learning environment.
- The activities planned ensure that pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. They are also developing well their awareness of chronology.
- Teachers make good use of interactive white boards; for example, in one class the pupils found film of the first landing on the moon very exciting and this added to their enjoyment.
- Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to apply skills that are taught in other subjects.
- Opportunities for assessment are not always identified in the planning or in lessons.
- The work of pupils is regularly marked but does not always give them advice on how to improve their work.
- An over-reliance in some classes on work sheets means that the rate of progress pupils make in developing broader historical skills is not as good as in others.

Quality of curriculum

- The school embarked in September on a thematic approach to foundation subjects based on a two or three year rolling programme. This provides a curriculum that meets the requirements of its pupils.
- Pupils' experiences of history are extended through a visiting author who writes about the local area and through visits to places of interest.
- An important strength is the development in history lessons of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- Pupils enjoy history lessons and they can accurately recall historical characters and events they have studied.
- The recently revised curriculum policy gives a good overview but little guidance on the content of the history curriculum.

Leadership and management of history

- The assistant head teacher leads a team that gives clear leadership and direction for history.
- You have been influential in driving forward a thematic approach to the curriculum. This is motivating and stimulating the pupils.
- Medium-term planning is detailed and focused on learning outcomes. However, there is a need to strengthen work in historical enquiry and interpretation. In addition, opportunities for assessment are not routinely identified.
- The school's long-term curriculum planning is innovative. However, monitoring and evaluation procedures have not yet been explicitly identified to ensure that there is appropriate progression in the pupils' historical knowledge, understanding and skills.

Subject issue: Literacy

- Pupils use their literacy skills well. The application of literacy skills is routinely planned into history lessons.
- Pupils are developing their skills in historical recall well when writing about a recent visit to the National Space Centre.
- Good opportunities are created for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. They use a wide range of vocabulary.
- Pupils are encouraged to use research skills. Historical texts are used well to develop pupils' higher order reading skills.

Inclusion

- Relationships are very positive, creating a good learning environment.
- Work is differentiated to meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils and for those identified as gifted and talented.
- Children enjoy history.
- Pupils of all abilities can confidently discuss their work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the curriculum planning and its impact on pupils' progress are monitored and evaluated thoroughly
- ensuring that pupils develop their skills of historical interpretation and enquiry
- identifying appropriate systems for assessing the pupils' progress.

Inspectors also drew your attention to a health and safety matter that needs to be addressed.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop history 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Champak Chauhan
Her Majesty's Inspector