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Mrs Briggs
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Briggs

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Thursday 14 December 2006 to look at work in history.

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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in history overall are outstanding.

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, but in history over recent years pupils' work has been excellent. Pupils make rapid progress through the Reception year and this rate is maintained well for all groups of pupils through the rest of the school.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent in history. Pupils value their history lessons highly. They are keen and enthusiastic to learn and behaviour in lessons is excellent. Not surprisingly, pupils talk avidly about the activities they experience and enjoy their lessons immensely.

Quality of teaching and learning of history

The quality of teaching and learning in history is outstanding.

- All teachers form excellent relationships with pupils and adopt a wide range of active strategies to engage and motivate them to achieve their best. Pupils are encouraged to work productively both independently and in groups. As a consequence, the quality of class discussions and the interactions between teachers and pupils is consistently excellent.
- Assessment procedures are effective. The subject leader constantly seeks to improve assessment and she is ensuring that teachers use it consistently across the school to address pupils' needs.
- Support and guidance in history is excellent. Teaching Assistants are used extremely well to lead and manage learning for identified groups of students.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The school has worked hard to provide a history curriculum which meets the needs of all students. An overall curriculum review in 2003 has enabled more cross-curricular links to be established so that history is used as context in a number of different curriculum areas such as music, drama and art.
- Particular strengths of the curriculum include a focus on creative and imaginative role plays and opportunities to develop literacy skills and extended writing. Pupils made a particular point of emphasising how much they enjoyed their history lessons and the range of topics they studied.
- The subject leader correctly identifies that interpretation in history is not addressed fully and that work in relation to this element lacks appropriate focus.

Leadership and management of history

Leadership and management in history is outstanding.

- The subject leader has created an excellent environment for learning in history. She has worked extremely hard, with her highly motivated and skilled colleagues, to raise achievement and standards in history.
- The subject leader's annual review of developments accurately identifies and exemplifies the subject's many strengths and smaller number of areas for development. However, this process requires more rigour in self-evaluation so that evidence for the impact of developments can be demonstrated clearly. The subject has made

excellent progress since the school's last inspection and knows that it has to consolidate as well as build on its current successes.

Subject issue: history and literacy

History places great emphasis on developing all aspects of literacy, not just writing. This focus has contributed strongly to raising standards in history. These developments have been encouraged and supported by the school in general.

Inclusion

All groups of students make rapid progress in history as a consequence of the excellent teaching, high quality of support and guidance and excellent provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that the new assessment arrangements are used by teachers to address pupils' needs even more effectively
- clarify the concept of interpretation in history so that both teachers and pupils better understand how the past has been represented
- make self-evaluation more rigorous.

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, the Diocese and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector