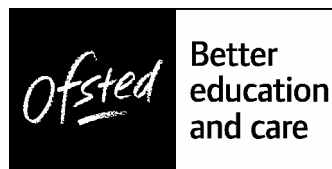


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



08 December 2006

Mrs Guertin
Headteacher
Felmore Primary School
Davenants
Pitsea
Basildon
SS13 1QX

Dear Mrs Guertin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – history

Thank you for making my visit on the 28 November so enjoyable and informative. I would particularly like to thank you for allowing the visit to go ahead despite the serious problems with subsidence in some parts of the school building. I would also like to thank you for putting up such an impressive display of history work for me to look at.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at work in history, the visit had a particular focus on literacy 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 documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history in your school was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good overall.

- Standards in history are below average but are improving. Pupils struggle with expressing their ideas in writing and although the school is working hard to improve the quality of their written work, more remains to be done,

particularly on extended writing. Pupils of all abilities and ages make good progress in many aspects of their historical learning. They make particularly good progress in historical enquiry and research skills, for example, and have developed a keen sense of historical curiosity by the time they leave the school. Progress in extended writing is satisfactory.

- Pupils are becoming confident learners who enjoy their history lessons. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'I like it because it explains why things are like they are and you can learn about your ancestors'. Another pupil, in Year 2, said he enjoyed history because, 'it lets you know olden day things'.
- By Year 6, pupils show a growing understanding of change over time and about how to study history. All pupils show a good recall of earlier work and Year 6 learners are well prepared for work at Key Stage 3.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Pupils enjoy learning because they have a lot of fun and practical activities in lessons.
- Teachers make excellent use of resources such as visitors, artefacts and role play to prompt questions and investigative work. During the visit, for example, Year 3 pupils visited a 'museum' run by a Victorian factory owner and his sons (the Year 6 teacher and two pupils).
- There is a good focus on independent learning and thinking skills.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum is organised around a scheme called *Mantle of the Expert*. This requires pupils to pretend to take on real jobs, like tourist officers or archaeologists, and use their own skills and knowledge to solve problems related to curricular targets. Year 2 pupils, for example, who have formed a company called *Celebrations R Us*, have been commissioned by a factory owner to provide him with information and historical background on various celebrations, such as Guy Fawkes Night and Thanksgiving. Pupils in Year 4 are organising a *World War Two Experience Day*. Pupils and teachers are very positive about this method of learning, and the school believes that it will help pupils to become more confident writers.
- The scheme of work is clear and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The full impact of improvements to the curriculum has not yet been felt on pupils' writing standards, however.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- Self-evaluation is good and the subject leader has accurately identified both the strengths and areas for development. She has many good ideas to further improve the subject.

Focus: Literacy in history

- This is good. The school is working very hard to improve pupils' writing skills, and recent improvements to the curriculum are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Pupils have very good opportunities to write creatively and at length.
- Pupils enjoy writing and are proud of their efforts.

Inclusion

- The provision for inclusion is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as those with English as an additional language, are well supported and the school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Areas for improvement

An area for improvement, which we discussed is to:

- continue helping pupils to improve their writing skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Dr Lynn Bappa
Additional Inspector