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Dear Mr Welch

Ofsted survey inspection programme - Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 08 December 2006 to look at work in geography.

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

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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Pupils are in the main reaching standards expected for their age or above. They have good knowledge and understanding of the local environment and can recall work learnt earlier and apply this to new situations. For example, pupils devised a photo story of the local area using the computer, a technique that they had used before. They are beginning to use a map key effectively and understand plan views.

- By the end of Year 6 they have a good general knowledge of places further afield and of coastal processes. Their locational knowledge of towns around the UK is less secure.
- Spelling is a weakness and deserves particular attention.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to use a variety of modern technology, such as interactive white boards, computers and digital cameras, which develop their ICT skills well.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers and are keen to learn; they work equally well in pairs, group and whole class situations. Their behaviour is very good.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching was good with some outstanding features.

- The lessons observed were at least good and had elements of outstanding teaching and learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this helps to ensure that the geography taught has considerable rigour.
- One lesson drew on global issues related to an Indian village, creating an opportunity to draw comparisons with life in the UK and small-scale plantation agriculture.
- Pupils were learning well despite the mixed age classes; teachers were adapting questioning techniques to suit pupils' level of understanding.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 had produced some excellent perception mapping of their routes to school, whilst older children had been encouraged, with considerable success, to draw free hand maps of India.
- Pupils' work is assessed regularly but there is no portfolio of levelled work to ensure accuracy of assessment against exemplars of past work.
- Very effective use is made of the interactive white boards.
- New UK maps are needed as those in use, such as the UK on a large peg board, are now dilapidated and no longer provide a stimulating resource for pupils.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- A good range of fieldwork is provided, including visits to the local area, the Eden Project, coastal environments and Falmouth. All pupils attend these trips. An excellent link also exists with the National Trust and a local farmer enables pupils to have an exposure to Fair Trade issues at an early age when she talks about this to pupils.
- Schemes of work are appropriate but need more clarity and greater consideration of progression in skills and geographical concepts.
- Greater consideration should be given to the changing nature of local farming, for example, tourism, caravan parks and niche farming.

- Excellent opportunities have been taken to develop creativity in cross-curricular links. For example, in art work of Andy Goldsworthy, poems and persuasive writing about Veryan.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management are good.

- In this very small school, all staff of necessity carry several responsibilities.
- Subjects are reviewed on a suitable rolling time scale. Clear issues for development are committed to an appropriate action plan.
- You ably lead the subject. Having a named governor link for each subject is a good strategy; ensuring governors have a clear view of the whole curriculum.

The global dimension

Pupils' learning about the global dimension is good.

- This aspect of geography is well developed through the study of other countries, including aboriginal art, the economy of Chembokoli and fair trade issues.
- The school has a DfES funded travel plan for pupils coming to school, thus cutting the burden of the carbon emission. Pupils were involved in planning this initiative.

Inclusion

- The school pays good attention to inclusion issues; for example, the school ensures that all pupils are engaged in fieldwork opportunities.
- Pupils are well supported by learning support staff in the classroom. Those with particular and, sometimes profound, needs are very well catered for and make good progress.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- develop a portfolio of pupils' levelled work
- consider the opportunities to explore the changes to the local economy, particularly in relation to farming, fishing and tourism
- ensure that there is clarity in the progression of skills and concepts in the schemes of work.

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

Jenny Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector