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Mr Eric Howard
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Howard

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on the 23 March 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.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards of pupils in history are good.

- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' ability to write about history is below average but their knowledge and understanding are average. Overall standards at the end Key Stage 2 are average.
- Pupils in Year 6 show a good level of knowledge and understanding and secure skills in history. Research skills are good because of very effective use of Information Communication Technology (ICT).
- Pupils achieve well given the low attainment on entry; progress in history throughout the school is good.
- Attitudes towards history are good as is shown by responses in lessons and the way pupils discuss the range of trips, visits and visitors that the school uses to support their work in history.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in history is good.

- Teaching was good in all the lessons observed and is clearly good over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use a range of strategies to make learning exciting and enjoyable.
- Work is well planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Tasks and resources are varied to support individuals who find the subject more difficult and those who have the ability to reach the very highest standards.
- Pupils work independently and in groups. ICT is used well by teachers and pupils. Pupils benefit from a clear focus on the development of skills for example in the use of time lines and oral history. Some effective use is made of work in numeracy but this could develop further.
- Sometimes teachers plan for too many activities for the available time.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- There is real focus on continuity and development from work in the Foundation Stage.
- The use of local contexts wherever possible, a focus on cross – curricular links and support for literacy are all proving effective in raising standards. The European dimension, developed through the Comenius project, is particularly valuable.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are good.

- Senior managers and the governors are clearly very supportive of work in history.
- Very effective use is made of the good resources that are available for history.
- The co-ordinator is very experienced and the annual subject review is a valuable form of evaluation although it does not yet focus on the Every Child Matters agenda.
- The school is aware of the need to ensure that pupils' skills in history are recognised when they enter Year 7 but existing channels of communication with secondary schools are not yet used for this purpose.

Literacy

- Standards of speaking and listening are better than those in reading and writing and teachers encourage pupils to express their views and share ideas. Writing skills are developed in topic books and there are some good opportunities for extended writing and for writing for a range of purposes and audiences. However, the school rightly recognises the need for further development.
- Research skills are good because such effective use is made of ICT and library resources. The interactive whiteboards and laptops are used very effectively.

Inclusion including provision for the gifted and talented

- Provision is very inclusive. The use of ICT and careful planning for differentiated activities and resources ensure that all pupils progress well. Support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities is effective and pupils with particular gifts and talents are catered for well by the provision of differentiated work and different expected outcomes.

Areas for improvement which we discussed are:

- improving links between work in history and the school's literacy programme
- exploring the potential for linking numeracy with history
- using the school's current links with secondary schools to improve transition arrangements
- ensuring that the annual review deals with the Every Child Matters agenda.

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