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Mrs Molyneux  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Molyneux

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 14 June 2007 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 focus on the emphasis placed on the global dimension of geography.

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 data, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

- By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils reach standards in line with national expectations. Most make satisfactory progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in geography.
- In reception, pupils have found out about toys from around the world, explored some features of their local environment and compared a different locality by visiting Brockholes Farm.

- At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of places they have studied. They are able to design simple maps, recognise some human and physical features in their locality and are aware though their study of Struay and other places that the world extends beyond their locality. They know that they can get to different places in a variety of ways.
- This work is appropriately developed in Years 3 and 4. Visits to Austerfield and to Eyam help pupils to consolidate previously learned skills.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of work they have studied and when given the opportunity can write about them in some detail. They are able to compare and contrast differing localities through their 'Passport to Adventure' work which is presented in interesting ways. They can identify the features of volcanoes, earthquakes and coastal erosion using appropriate geographical vocabulary.
- Pupils generally are keen and enthusiastic about their work. Their behaviour is good and they respond well to clear classroom expectations. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.

#### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features.

- Work is well planned and resources carefully selected to add interest to the lessons. All teachers make learning objectives clear to pupils and these are revisited during lessons to recap on learning. This helps pupils to consolidate new knowledge.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to work in small groups, pairs and individually, ensuring access to a variety of learning techniques. Pupils respond well to these opportunities.
- Good lessons have a brisk pace and carefully build on previous learning to extend pupils' thinking. Lessons are well structured, with teachers using a variety of activities which are carefully selected. ICT and visual resources are used effectively and these help bring the subject to life for the greater majority.
- In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, introductions are over long and over- dominated by the teacher. This slows the pace of lessons and limits the amount of progress they make.
- Although there is some assessment and moderation of pupils' work, it is currently partial and under-developed.
- Scrutiny of work shows that there are limited opportunities for extended writing throughout the school. In particular, higher attaining pupils are often not always provided with additional challenge. This prevents them from making better progress.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The geography curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance and there is sufficient time for its delivery. The school is in the process of reviewing its curriculum. It proposes to have less reliance on published schemes of work, developing more relevant units of work that are naturally linked to other subjects.
- Some useful and interesting cross-curricular work has been undertaken to promote learning in geography, particularly in a Year 6 history study of the World War 2. Involvement in the 'Technology Challenge' project also provides good opportunities to develop geographical thinking and understanding.
- Fieldwork experiences around the school, to Normanby Park, Hatfield and Parsons House are highly appreciated and contribute positively to the subject and pupils' learning.
- Interesting geography displays in classrooms help enhance the planned curriculum and are used appropriately by pupils to support their learning.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management of geography are satisfactory.

- The subject leader is keen and enthusiastic. He has swiftly and successfully established an accurate understanding of the strengths in the subject and the areas which need further development compiled in a comprehensive subject leader file.
- This accurate self evaluation has been used to produce an appropriate plan of action which incorporates a manageable range of developments required to bring about further improvement.
- Development of the subject has been limited. Work to develop the curriculum has been delayed while other whole school priorities have been addressed.

## Subject issue

Pupils' learning about the global dimension is satisfactory.

- There is a satisfactory focus on the global dimension including the study of places both local and distant.
- Pupils are increasing their understanding of global issues through the study of themes such as tiger conservation in India and the uses of water.
- The school has recently been awarded the intermediate 'International Schools Award'. Proposals to establish and develop links with other countries have the potential to further increase pupils understanding of the geography of these places.

- Links with 'UNICEF' and 'Water Aid' have helped increase pupils' awareness of the inter-dependence of countries and places.

## Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good overall.

- All pupils are taught in mixed ability classes with boys and girls having equal access. Questioning is widely distributed and involves all pupils.
- Teachers plan lessons with the needs of specific groups and individuals in mind. In the lessons observed, well targeted differentiated activities were provided for pupils with different learning needs.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed in geography lessons to support individual pupils and groups.

## Areas for improvement

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

- continue to review the curriculum and link subjects together where appropriate to make geography even more interesting, relevant and enjoyable for pupils
- devise a simple method of sharing assessments made by teachers which effectively tracks pupils' progress and helps receiving teachers build on pupils' prior skills to increase rates of progress
- increase opportunities for extended writing in the subject, particularly for those higher attaining pupils to increase their rates of progress.

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 the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
Her Majesty's Inspector