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Miss Theaker
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Dear Miss Theaker

Ofsted survey inspection programme – geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 03 December 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 school's response to 'Excellence and Enjoyment' and how this is impacting on provision in geography, particularly in terms of planning and progression.

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 and pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are both good.

- Pupils' standards are above national expectations with a relatively high proportion of pupils working at higher National Curriculum levels because of the effective teaching and well planned curriculum.

- Pupils have good opportunities for fieldwork, especially in Year 6, but more opportunities could be provided to use and develop their geographical enquiry and fieldwork skills.
- Pupils of all abilities have good quantities of well presented work.
- The outstanding personal development and well-being of pupils make a significant contribution to their good achievement. They sustain their concentration very well, and collaborate very effectively when working in groups.
- They have good self-evaluation skills and, for example, judged how effectively their groups had worked during an orienteering and map work lesson.

Quality of teaching and learning of geography

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

- Lessons are well planned, interactive whiteboards are used very effectively, questions are used to challenge pupils and extend their learning, and instructions and explanations are clear and precise.
- Teaching develops pupils' map work skills in a wide variety of contexts, including orienteering.
- Other subjects are used well to reinforce and add to geographical learning. For example, in an imaginative English lesson, pupils worked with a wide range of resources as they carried out five different research tasks to learn a great deal about Malaysia to prepare a geographical context for writing an adventure story.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked but comments do not always inform them of what they need to do to further improve their learning.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Teachers base their lesson plans on the school's well structured, detailed medium-term planning which includes opportunities for assessment.
- There are good links with information and communication technology (ICT). For example, Year 3 pupils use ICT links with pupils from two other local schools as part of their work on the school's locality.
- Geography contributes to pupils' citizenship knowledge and skills through the school's links with a school in South Africa and another in Nepal.
- The school's Eco-Schools award has also increased pupils' awareness of, and involvement in, recycling and conserving resources.
- The Year 6 Derbyshire residential course provides pupils with a very wide range of rich geographical experiences but insufficient opportunities for them to develop their geographical enquiry and fieldwork skills.

Leadership and management of geography

Leadership and management of geography are good.

- There is an ongoing commitment to improve provision in geography.
- The school's self-evaluation of its geography provision is accurate. The geography leader regularly monitors teachers' lesson planning and pupils' work.
- The geography development plan is part of the school's improvement plan, and includes appropriate priorities for improvement.
- The subject leader's excellent subject knowledge has been used effectively to write the school's medium-term plans and to foster the good subject knowledge of other staff.

Subject issue

The impact of curriculum planning on progression in geography is good.

- The well structured, detailed medium-term plans provide a good framework for progression in pupils' learning.
- Although there is a good fieldwork programme with work in each year, fieldwork activities often focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. They do not provide enough opportunities for progression in pupils' geographical enquiry and skills.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion in geography is good overall.

- Different groups of pupils make similar good progress in geography. For example, boys and girls achieved equally well as they researched about Malaysia.
- Teachers monitor and support the progress of all pupils during lessons, and target questions effectively for pupils of differing abilities.
- The school's ethos fosters the self-confidence of all pupils and a common desire to learn.

Areas for improvement

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

- ensure that targeted provision and planning enable pupils to make good progress in developing geographical enquiry and skills
- ensure that marking gives clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work
- compile a portfolio of pupils' assessed work so that all teachers are aware of the expected standards in each year.

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

Mike Milton
Additional Inspector