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Mr M Courtier  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Courtier

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 05 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 the observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are both good.

- Pupils often make good progress. For example, Year 7 pupils' knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences of tsunamis are above national expectations. They also have a good

understanding of the possible steps that might be taken to reduce the human suffering caused by tsunamis.

- Year 4 pupils investigated the problems of litter on the school's site, and explained their findings well and made good suggestions about how they could have improved their investigations.
- There is some variation in pupils' standards and outcomes between different units of work. For example, Year 6 pupils' achievement was satisfactory as they compared two contrasting settlements following fieldwork because they did not have opportunities to ask their own questions and decide how to collect their information.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They are attentive and keen to answer questions. Year 4 pupils enjoyed working on the litter project because it involved investigating a real issue. Year 6 pupils enjoyed the residential course enormously and it gave them many opportunities for personal development.

### Quality of teaching and learning of geography

Insufficient lessons were observed to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching. Evidence through observation, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils suggests that the quality of learning is good overall.

- Lessons usually start with the sharing of learning objectives with pupils, and include the use of some stimulating resources such as video of a TV news item about the recent floods in Bangladesh.
- In the observed lesson, questioning was used well and evoked good responses from pupils.
- Lessons include some good links with information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy as, for example, pupils use presentational software to record the findings of their fieldwork and write scripts for a news item about a natural disaster.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked but this rarely identifies pupils' successes or aspects for improvement.
- The school has introduced an assessment record that involves pupils' self assessment against the key learning objectives as well as teachers' assessment of pupils' progress. This record has been used well with some of the units of geographical work completed in the autumn term.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- There is a good long-term plan of geography topics underpinned by a clear rationale. The geography leader has written well structured, detailed medium-terms plans based on national guidance and teachers use these as they plan their lessons.

- Medium-term plans are regularly updated. For example, the Year 4 plans about an Indian village were recently rewritten to incorporate global citizenship.
- Year 6 pupils have the very good opportunity to spend four nights at a residential field study centre in a rural environment which few have previously experienced. Those who do not wish to stay away from home cover a similar range of work with day trips from school.
- Links between geography and other subjects are developing well. For example, geographical work on natural disasters links with ICT and design and technology. The global dimension to the curriculum is supported by links with a school in Normandy and another in Trinidad.
- There is a good fieldwork programme.

### Leadership and management of geography

Leadership and management of geography are good.

- There is a well structured geography improvement plan with appropriate priorities, and geography is included in the school's improvement plan.
- The geography leader regularly assesses the work of a sample of pupils in each class at the end of units of work and gives the teachers feedback on pupils' standards and progress.
- Good use has been made of subject expertise to write the geography medium-term plans, and the most recent updates are also of a high quality.
- Learning resources are well organised.

### Subject issue

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

- The well structured, detailed medium-term plans together with the assessment record provide a good framework for progression in pupils' learning.
- Although there is a good fieldwork programme with work in each year, fieldwork activities do not always provide enough opportunities for progression in pupils' geographical enquiry and skills.

### Inclusion

The provision for inclusion in geography is good overall.

- All groups of pupils achieve well in geography.
- The good medium-term plans include some guidance to teachers on matching work to pupils' differing learning needs.
- Pupils' good personal development gives them all confidence to contribute to lessons and a desire to do their best.

## Areas for improvement

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

- ensure that pupils make good progress in developing their geographical enquiry and skills in each year
- ensure that marking consistently helps pupils to identify their successes and points for further improvement
- develop the use of the record of pupils' self-assessment and teachers' assessment at the end of each unit of geography work to support new learning.

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