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Mrs S Lall
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lall

Ofsted survey inspection programme – geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 26 November 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 is good and standards are below average.

- Attainment on entry is very low but pupils mostly achieve well because teaching is usually good. Although geography standards by the end of Year 6 have improved, they still remain below national expectations.
- Pupils observed in the mixed-age Year 2 and 3 class were studying a village in India. During the lesson, Year 2 pupils were working below expectations as they began to use compass directions to describe

simple routes. On the other hand, Year 3 were matching national expectations as they used their good knowledge and understanding to write in the role of a child living in the village.

- Year 6 pupils have produced a substantial amount of recorded work so far this term. The more-able pupils are working at the expected standard as they are able to interpret a range of maps and other data to devise and measure a route from Faversham to Paris. Other pupils attain less well.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Classes are usually well managed and the work is engaging. Pupils respond with interest and with good levels of concentration. Most work well collaboratively.

Quality of teaching and learning of geography

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Strengths of the teaching include effective class management, use of a range of interesting resources including interactive whiteboards, asking pupils to explain their answers and clear, step-by-step teaching that helps to develop pupils' language skills.
- Teaching focuses on helping pupils to learn the key geographical vocabulary well.
- Occasional weaknesses include a slow pace of learning that does not involve all pupils during the plenary, and activities and resources that do not fully interest some groups of pupils.
- Learning intentions are regularly shared with pupils in lessons. A start has also been made to ask pupils to devise their own questions about topics and then decide how to answer them.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Some good links are developing between geography and other subjects. For example, Year 6 use presentation software to record some of their work and they use e-mail to collect information from people who live in the parts of France that they are studying.
- Pupils are developing their citizenship skills and understanding when they contact the local council about environmental concerns following local fieldwork.
- There is a good range of fieldwork including some combined history and geography work on the local brick making and quarrying industries. This requires pupils to use a wide range of skills. However, progression in pupils' enquiry and fieldwork skills is insufficiently clear.

Leadership and management of geography

Leadership and management of geography are good.

- There is a good quality review of geography each summer and geography is part of the school improvement plan.
- The geography leader is well informed about the geography work in each class, and regularly monitors the quality of marking.
- There is a geography action plan which identifies appropriate priorities. This includes compiling a portfolio of pupils' work to demonstrate the standards expected in each year group.

Subject issue

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

- The school uses national guidance and a published scheme for pupils' skill development as a basis for teachers' medium-term planning. This provides a satisfactory framework for progression in pupil's learning.
- The subject leader does not yet monitor the medium-term planning to ensure that the progression in pupils learning from year to year is clear.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion in geography is good overall.

- Different groups of pupils make similar good progress in geography.
- Pupils of all abilities are usually keen to be fully involved in learning.
- Teachers plan effectively for the wide range of abilities within their class, most of which include mixed-age groups.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to provide tasks in groups that match the differing learning needs in each class.

Areas for improvement

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

- monitor teachers' medium-term plans to ensure that there is progression in pupils' learning, especially for fieldwork and enquiry skills
- compile a portfolio of pupils' 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