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Mr R Moore
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Dear Mr Moore

Ofsted survey inspection programme - history

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during our visit on 03 December to inspect work in history.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: inspecting three lessons, interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and a review of a sample of pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils make satisfactory progress and they are developing well their knowledge and understanding of, for example, the Great Fire of London and of aspects of the Second World War.
- Pupils studying the Second World War work well with a good range of historical sources, including original newspapers, film clips and other primary sources, for example letters written by evacuated children. However, their evaluation of the reliability of such sources is less well developed.

- The more able write at length and for different audiences and purposes. However, the average and lower attainers do not do so.
- Pupils are well behaved and they work well with each other. Most maintain their concentration on the activities set.

Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features.

- Pupils' written work over time indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory and some of the teaching observed was good.
- In the better practice, learning activities are well organised and pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of the Second World War. This involves role play work and researching aspects of the war on computers in the information and technology (ICT) suite.
- Elsewhere, the teaching is well planned and organised. Learning objectives are shared with the class. A good range of resources is used. However, the questioning is not always sufficiently precise to extend pupils' understanding of changes over time.
- Pupils' work in history is routinely marked and some helpful comments have been made. The comments, however, do not always explain to pupils how their written work could be improved. Targets for improvement are not routinely identified for the pupils to aspire to.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is broad and it is strongly supported by the use of Qualification and Curriculum Authority schemes of work.
- More detailed schemes of work for the different study units have not yet been drawn up and this is an important priority that needs to be addressed.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits to places of historical interest, including Warwick Castle, Selly Manor and the museums in nearby Leicester. Visitors are also regularly invited to talk to pupils about particular aspects of history.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- A policy for history is in place and there is a long-term curriculum plan for the subject.
- A co-ordinator has only recently been appointed but she has not yet had the time to lead developments. It is anticipated that she will do so soon and she will also be given additional time for monitoring and evaluating provision in the subject.

Subject issue: ICT

There is good provision for the development of the pupils' skills in ICT. Pupils have good skills in using a range of appropriate resources, including digital cameras. Pupils in Year 4 can competently prepare Power Point presentations and they are able to download information and music from the Internet. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have excellent skills in, for example, retrieving information from the Internet about VE day. The older pupils have ICT skills of a high order.

Inclusion

Inclusion is satisfactory.

- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and their role is planned for.
- Identified pupils are closely supported. However, targets for improvement for particular pupils are not always identified, or progress against these targets evaluated.

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

- ensure that there is more detailed planning for the curriculum and that relevant schemes of work are properly formulated
- ensure that pupils are routinely engaged in the evaluation of historical sources
- ensure that marking and assessment procedures indicate to pupils how to improve their work.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop history in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and made available to the team for the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Champak Chauhan
Her Majesty's Inspector