

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



05 February 2008

Mrs J Branch
Headteacher
Farcet CofE Primary School
St Mary's Street
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
PE7 3AR

Dear Mrs Branch

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 24 January to look at work in history.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on information and communication technology.

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 you, the staff and pupils, a scrutiny of relevant documentation, an analysis of pupils' work and the observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Pupils make good progress over time. Pupils in Key Stage 1, for instance, can compare different types of castles, and can identify key features such as turrets and draw bridges. They can competently research different aspects of family life in Roman times. They are developing their research skills well.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are making good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of aspects of Ancient Greece. They have good knowledge of, for example, Greek theatre and temples, of the Ancient Olympics, of Greek gods and goddesses and of key figures such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. They work well with each other and with the adults. They maintain their concentration on the activities set and many are very interested in the subject.

Quality of teaching and learning

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

- Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships. Teachers and other adults have appropriately high expectations of the pupils and encourage them to do their best.
- Lesson planning is detailed. Teachers know the needs of individual pupils well and they plan work accordingly. The level of challenge is usually high.
- Activities are organised extremely well and pupils know what they have to do. All pupils are normally engaged in their learning.
- The teachers have good questioning skills and they use these well to extend pupils' understanding. They offer good oral feedback to the pupils.
- The pupils' work is regularly marked. Helpful written comments are usually made and the pupils find these useful. The pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own work and they value such opportunities.
- The role of additional adults in the classroom, however, is not always identified in the planning. It is not always clear why they are supporting particular pupils.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and generally balanced.
- The curriculum is currently being reviewed and its planning strengthened to enable greater flexibility and creativity. More emphasis is being given to the study of history over a longer period of time. Topics with a focus on history will incorporate other subjects, for example geography, when appropriate. However, it is important that the planning cycle is appropriately timed and that it meets the needs of all ages and abilities.
- Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced by visits to places of historical interest and by the regular use of outside visitors. For example, pupils visit the local museum regularly and younger pupils recently went to see the Tutankhamun exhibition in London.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The two subject coordinators are enthusiastic and they lead the subject well. They are constantly striving to improve provision, and they have a

good understanding of strengths and areas that need further development.

- The subject coordinators evaluate teaching and learning through informal discussion with other staff and through a scrutiny of pupils' work. The tight budgetary considerations of this small school mean that they cannot readily be released to formally observe other teachers teaching.

Subject issue: information and communication technology

The use of ICT is good.

- Staff and pupils use the interactive whiteboard regularly and confidently.
- Pupils have good skills in ICT. They are developing these further in history through the identification and interrogation of relevant websites. They can download information readily and can use this to write for different audiences and purposes, for example creating a newspaper in Ancient Greek times.

Inclusion

All groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils' origins are predominantly white British. Issues of ethnic diversity are addressed through the study of relevant topics, for example about the life of Mary Seacole.

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

- the role of all adults in the classroom is routinely identified in the planning and that they are used more efficiently
- the emerging planning cycle meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those in mixed-age classes.

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 and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Champak Chauhan
Her Majesty's Inspector