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Mrs Karen Bigg
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bigg

Ofsted 2007-08 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 25 March 2008 to look at work in citizenship.

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 pupils' work and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be good with outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good with outstanding features.

- Pupils fully understand that rights and responsibilities are interwoven. They appreciate that rules exist to ensure respect and safety for all members of the school community.
- Pupils enthusiastically take on positions of responsibility, for example play pals, house monitors or members of the well-established school council. The latter means that pupils understand the basics of democracy; older pupils know that some countries are not democracies.
- Particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils research and debate controversial issues. Some of them can present both sides of an argument.

convincingly, for example on whether a large supermarket should be given planning permission in the local area. Pupils understand the function of pressure groups, such as Greenpeace.

- Following a suggestion by the school council, some older children recently produced a News 4 Kids newspaper - an exciting development. As it evolves, pupils plan to report on events and topical issues.
- Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the importance of working together harmoniously and helping and being kind to others. At Harvest Festival school council members take gifts to a local elderly care home. Pupils are generous raising funds for charity, for example for Sports Relief and a local hospice.
- Eco/green monitors started work last year. An example of their work is that they took Christmas cards to a local retail outlet for recycling. The school is developing pupils' environmental and sustainable awareness well.

Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers guide pupils skilfully to write convincing arguments about controversial and topical issues.
- The Life Bus teacher is skilful at presenting and discussing information about healthy lifestyles. She encourages pupils to think and to respond to questions, for example about how drinking can lead to accidents.
- In a lively personal, social, health and citizenship lesson, pupils grasped the meaning of, for example, 'assertive' and 'aggressive', by saying the words in the manner they represented. In this lesson, many pupils were eager to answer questions but only a few were asked to respond.
- Teachers do not stress fully enough the links between the work being studied and citizenship and its relevance to life outside school and pupils' futures.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme has been developed very well over the last few years. It significantly helps pupils to play an active role as citizens of the school and local community.
- Assemblies contribute well to pupils' knowledge of citizenship and religious education lessons reinforce their understanding of different faiths. Pupils particularly remember learning about 'inspirational people' such as Florence Nightingale and Nelson Mandela.
- Your subscription to an online news site for children provides pupils with an easy way to access simple explanations of topical events. Some classes use this site more than others.
- Several subjects include citizenship topics, for example water as a world resource in geography or the emergence of democracy studying the Greeks in history. How such topics impact on pupils' lives is not always emphasised enough.

Leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship is good with outstanding features.

- You and your deputy head give citizenship a high profile and appreciate its importance to the pupils' well-being and preparation for life as good citizens.
- You organised multi-cultural training for your lunchtime supervisors and observe that it was successful.
- Your governing body is enthusiastic and supportive of your keen focus on citizenship and it is very helpful that one member takes a particular interest in the development of the subject.
- Your curriculum evaluation tool is an effective way of reflecting on the citizenship content of lessons and making improvements.

Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

- In past years pupils' stereotypical images of the lifestyles of immigrants from less developed countries were confronted skilfully, for example during an Africa week and an Asia week. Both of these had a strong impact on pupils' appreciation of different cultures.
- Your last inspection report noted that the school is 'anxious to develop learning about life in a diverse society' and you have made good progress since then. You check that the books used in school and in the library reflect the UK's diverse society.
- Outside speakers contribute much to pupils' appreciation of the UK's population, for example talks on Judaism or refugees.

Inclusion

- The school provides excellent anger management training to help some pupils to cope with school life. This helps them to understand how to discuss controversial issues in a calm way.
- In a lesson on Martin Luther King a few pupils already knew a great deal about him and their knowledge and understanding was not extended.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- strengthen how teachers explore with pupils the links between citizenship work and their present and future lives
- ensure that teachers ask as many different pupils as possible to answer questions in lessons
- check that pupils' prior citizenship knowledge is taken into account when planning work.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship 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 inspection.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies
Additional Inspector