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Ms D Wiles
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Wiles

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 14 February 2008 to look at work in citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity.

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.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Pupils have a very good understanding of what rights and responsibilities mean. The school offers them many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility.
- School council members perform their roles seriously and the council is effective at getting things done. It is excellent that all the suggestions put forward and the school's response to them are displayed. Pupils are realistic and understand that money is often the key factor determining whether they can have what they want.

- The maturity of the school council is exemplified by how pupils vote for those whom they know will represent them fairly and get things done. This has led to an articulate and confident council.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others and how people can help each other. They have a simple understanding of voluntary organisations, for example through the UNICEF 'Day for Change'.
- Pupils are developing good, formal debating skills and learning how to evaluate two sides of an argument. This practice could be extended by having debates between and within mixed age groups.
- Pupils are reasonably aware of sustainability issues, particularly recycling. It is helpful that the new Children's Centre being built on site is an environmentally friendly building.

Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- A striking feature of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHCE) books is the high quality of marking. Teachers make thoughtful comments and then pose a question to extend pupils' thinking. Pupils respond with interesting ideas.
- All citizenship lessons, or lessons with links to the subject, are delivered in a happy, supportive manner which encourages children to articulate their ideas and thoughts. Teachers are good at linking work to what has been done in previous lessons.
- Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to show materials relevant to topics or to display pupils' writing for discussion.
- A good Year 6 lesson debate, on whether children should have a television in their bedroom, would have been even better if the pupils had done some individual research beforehand.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The nursery curriculum includes a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of fairness, empathy with others' feelings and the need to help people.
- A generous amount of time is allocated to PSHCE and religious education (RE). Work is planned carefully to revisit topics each year at a higher level of understanding.
- Pupils discuss drugs education linked to how the media reports on related issues.
- The PSHCE programme includes elements of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). Pupils study issues concerning bullying and appreciate that a good citizen would never bully anyone.
- The school uses its surroundings well to help pupils see their place in the local community.
- The school regularly hosts outside speakers. Year 5 work on democracy is brought to life when the local member of parliament visits to answer their questions, such as "What does it take to be an MP?"

- A talk about young carers for Year 3 pupils is a very good way of helping them to understand how they have different lifestyles and commitments.
- Much of the work in religious education is linked to important citizenship ideas. Learning about the roles of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope, for example, pupils consider the importance of leadership and whether men and women are equally good leaders.

Leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- You enthusiastically put into practice your PSHCE policy statement that pupils should “participate fully in society and value themselves and others”. You support the school council very well. All the school’s aims and policies focus on respect, responsibility and community.
- The new citizenship coordinator has already purchased some up-to-date resources and attended some useful courses. She appreciates the importance of this subject and has good ideas for its further growth.
- The document describing the rights and responsibilities of staff, governors, parents and pupils is a valuable and effective way to help pupils understand that all members of society must be treated respectfully and fairly.
- Your strong focus on developing pupils’ personal and social skills is a continuing strength of the school’s provision. It nurtures pupils’ awareness of what it means to be a thoughtful and kind citizen.

Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain’s diversity

- Through religious education and PSHCE lessons, pupils learn to empathise with different faiths and backgrounds.
- Pupils happily engage in debate about their own backgrounds and value the diversity of the school community. They understand Britishness is a difficult concept to define and discuss it with interest.
- You observe that as a direct result of your focused work there has been a significant drop in the number of racist and bullying incidents.
- In Year 5, pupils consider the feelings of someone new to the UK. This is a good way of developing their understanding of Britain’s diversity.

Inclusion

- Whether teachers are preparing work or using outside organisations, they ensure that citizenship work is planned for pupils’ different abilities so that all of them are fully involved.
- Teachers mark PSHCE work thoughtfully so that all pupils’ ideas, whatever their ability, are extended.
- Anger management sessions successfully help some pupils to cope with school life so that they can join in all lessons. A few pupils, for example, use puppets to help others adapt their behaviour or cope with problems.

- All the languages spoken by the pupils are respected in a lively display in the entrance hall. The school celebrates many other cultures and traditions, such as the Chinese New Year and African masks.
- Year 6 work on Martin Luther King has a positive impact on pupils' awareness of human rights.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- helping pupils in all year groups to research and debate topical issues more often
- involving the school council in discussion about what it could do for people in the local community.

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 institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies
Additional Inspector