

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



20 March 2008

Mr Robinson
Headteacher
Bilton Community Primary School
School Lane
Bilton
East Riding of Yorkshire
HU11 4EG

Dear Mr Robinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 March 2008 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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are both good.

- Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 from their attainment on entry to the school.

- Pupils have a good knowledge of the places and themes they have studied. They know where places are and what they are like.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 accurately describe a number of features of the local area. They are becoming familiar with maps and use other sources of evidence to express views about their environment. They have a growing awareness of the wider world and an appropriate geographical vocabulary with which to describe it.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of the factors which influence the character of different places. They also show a good understanding of the processes affecting settlement patterns and coastal features. They appreciate the impact of the choices that people make on the environment.
- Pupils demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways including the use of information and communication technology (ICT). However, they have limited opportunity to write about their findings or views and opinions in depth.
- The school is successful in developing pupils' curiosity about the wider world. Consequently, they enjoy finding out about unfamiliar places and about natural events at home and abroad.
- As they mature, pupils acquire positive moral attitudes about issues such as Fair Trade and the management of the environment.
- Pupils become confident learners and participate well in lessons. Their behaviour is very good.

Quality of teaching and learning of geography

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers have created bright, welcoming classrooms and encourage learning by providing good wall displays.
- Very good relationships underpin the good quality of lessons. This creates a positive ethos for learning and ensures that pupils work hard.
- Lessons are planned thoroughly. Activities and resources are chosen carefully to involve and interest pupils of different ages and abilities. For example, the interactive whiteboard is used well to help make learning easier.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what they are expected to learn because teachers provide clear explanations.
- There is good collaboration with teaching assistants. As a result, they effectively lead the learning of individuals and small groups.
- Specific skills are taught well, for example, how to read maps or how to use ICT software such as Excel.
- Pupils experience a good variety of learning activities. They regularly use computers to help them with their work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but often comments are too general to guide future learning effectively.
- There is an established system for assessing pupils' work which enables teachers to have a clear view of what pupils have achieved by

the end of each year. However, limited use is made of this information to plan the next stages in pupils' learning.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum plan makes use of national units of work to create a teaching programme that meets pupils' needs well. It is planned effectively to cater for a number of mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers make modifications to units of work to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the surrounding area, topical issues and their own enthusiasms and experience. Each unit of work is planned in detail and links are made with literacy and the use of ICT.
- The recent restructuring of the timetable to allow the units to be taught in blocks is facilitating more in-depth study.
- The provision of fieldwork is good. The environment of the school and the locality is used extensively to promote learning. Coastal visits are undertaken and there is a well established residential visit to Northumberland in Year 6. Plans are well in hand for a further residential visit in Year 4 in the summer term.
- The curriculum is further enriched by a number of projects and initiatives. For example, the creation of a wonderful 'African Garden' has stimulated interest in this continent and its people. The school council is active in a number of schemes such as re-cycling and Fair Trade. The school also participates in cultural events which extend pupils' understanding of other places and peoples. However, these initiatives have not yet been explicitly planned so that they form an established part of the geography curriculum.

Leadership and management of geography

Leadership and management of geography are good.

- Effective co-ordination of the subject takes place in the context of the strong leadership and clear vision provided by yourself.
- Provision is conscientiously managed and teachers are given good support to plan and resource their topics.
- Good progress has been made in establishing a portfolio of pupils' work to help guide staff on standards and assessment.
- An appropriate action plan has been established which is based upon whole-school priorities for improvement. The identification of these areas for school improvement is built on robust systems for checking the quality of provision. These systems include observations of geography lessons by the co-ordinator. These are carried out diligently and helpfully contribute to the understanding of provision. However, they do not focus strongly enough on the impact of teaching upon learning.

Subject issue

The impact of curriculum planning on progression and the quality of provision in geography is good.

- There is a good emphasis on making learning enjoyable as teachers are encouraged to be creative and to make meaningful links with other subjects.
- There is a strong emphasis on helping pupils to learn from direct experience, so that good use is made of visits and visitors.
- The recent re-organisation of the timetable has contributed to gains in knowledge and understanding because pupils study topics in more depth.
- There has been good initial work on linking the Foundation Stage curriculum to the planning of topics in Year 1. This is strengthening the continuity of learning.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion in geography is good.

- Lessons are planned carefully so that pupils of different ages and abilities can make progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well and keep a close eye on their progress in lessons.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with good levels of support as they work on activities.
- The interesting variety of activities provided ensures that pupils engage well with their learning.

Areas for improvement

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

- provide systematic opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their learning through extended writing of different kinds
- complete the portfolio of pupils' work and to use assessment information more effectively to guide the next stages of learning
- make explicit links to matters such as sustainable development and global education as part of the process of curriculum development.

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

Ralph Higgs
Additional inspector