

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



07 March 2008

Mr M A Perry
Headteacher
St Peter's CE Aided School
Quarry Lane
Heavitree
Exeter, Devon
EX2 5AP

Dear Mr Perry

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Citizenship and History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 04 and 05 March 2008, accompanied by Michael Maddison HMI, to look at work in citizenship and history.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the citizenship, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity. In history there was a particular focus on use of information and communication technology (ICT).

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 teachers and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of lessons.

Citizenship

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be satisfactory. This judgement is based on a balance of particular strengths and weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Overall, standards are satisfactory.

- Students' knowledge and understanding of some aspects of the citizenship curriculum, such as human rights, the EU, and the

international dimension are good and sometimes outstanding. However, knowledge and understanding of key areas of the citizenship curriculum including government and politics, the law and the economy, are relatively weak.

- There are good and some exceptional opportunities for participation and responsible action, but there is no systematic development of these capacities in citizenship contexts, so that students' progress is erratic.
- Although students carry out some citizenship enquiry in a range of contexts, there is very little written output from their study. The exception to this is the small number of students studying the half course GCSE who produce thoughtful coursework and achieve good standards and results. Last year 11 out of 16 students attained grades A or B.
- Many students have good opportunities for participation in citizenship.
- The school council has some achievements to its credit but is not yet providing students with a model of representative democracy. Students are appointed by a range of methods and tutors vary in the extent to which they allow for preparation and follow up.

Quality of teaching and learning of citizenship

- There was little opportunity to observe teachers in citizenship lessons.
- Good sessions were observed taken by visiting speakers. These were well planned and challenging and were well received by students.
- Students offered differing views of citizenship within their personal, social, health and citizenship lessons (PSHCE). One view was that they are interesting and relevant. Another was that they are repetitive and 'obvious' with an over emphasis on discussion using 'circle time' as the teaching method.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall.

- There are some great strengths to the curriculum, particularly the international dimension of citizenship. However this is counterbalanced by the absence of significant treatment to key areas of citizenship, specifically the working of parliament and government, the law and the economy, and by the lack of progression between the key stages.
- The three strands of citizenship are insufficiently related together to produce coherent programmes.
- There are areas of blurring within the PSHCE programme where citizenship elements are insufficiently defined; overall the PSHCE programme does not yet provide a core of citizenship. However, there is scope for further development as the current units are evaluated, refined or replaced.
- A small number of students take citizenship GCSE. This is at present a separate venture from the core programme but could be used to

develop a shared understanding of standards and assessment in citizenship.

- Some subjects make an important contribution to citizenship, for example geography and mathematics. However, others that completed the audit, for example history, make good links but do not contribute to a core programme.
- The school's international work gives both direct and indirect support to citizenship. This is manifested in a range of ways including curricular and extra curricular activities and assemblies. The evidence of work done as part of the Africa Week and the school's link to Malawi was particularly impressive.

Leadership and management of citizenship

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- The school has a developing vision for citizenship, broadly and narrowly defined, but there is a need as a priority to tackle some basic weaknesses in the core curriculum as it seeks to innovate in other respects.
- The subject leader has organised a complex programme with some strengths and is continuing to develop areas which are weaker nationally, including assessment. There is now a need for a sharper focus on citizenship objectives and standards. Appropriate subject leader training may help in achieving this.
- Good support is available from the SMT and colleagues whose work comes to bear on citizenship.
- Broadly, the school is aware of what needs to be done and these are incorporated in the development plan.

Subject issue: teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

- Students have a sound understanding of Britain's diversity.
- They understand the influences that have caused Britain's population to become more diverse and have a respect for different cultural traditions.

Inclusion

- In Key Stage 3 provision was inclusive.
- In Key Stage 4 there is an issue of entitlement as some students do the short GCSE course, others have PSHCE and a few students miss some elements of this.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that students receive the full citizenship programme of study and that they have the opportunity to make progress in key subject areas

- continue to evaluate the PSHCE programme to identify how far it can provide the vehicle for those parts of National Curriculum citizenship that are currently absent
- rationalise the relationship between Key Stage 4 PSHCE and GCSE citizenship
- further support the leadership of citizenship, possibly through enrolment on a DCSF funded citizenship CPD course.

History

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good and standards are above average.

- At Key Stage 3 students are doing well and some students are achieving standards which are well above average.
- At GCSE standards are high. In 2007, 71% of students attained grades A*-C and 44% attained grades A*-A. This represented good achievement, and performance at the highest levels was above average for both boys and girls.
- Students make good progress in lessons. They are acquiring a good knowledge of issues studied, have a good understanding of historical themes and can make connections between topics. They are also developing good skills in relation to the analysis and evaluation of sources, as seen in a Year 11 lesson when students were undertaking a coursework assignment on Stalin's Russia.
- The personal development of students in history is good. They have good attitudes to the subject, are enthusiastic about lessons and enjoy their learning. This contributes to the good progress they make.
- Behaviour is good and a healthy number choose history at GCSE. This is essentially due to the positive environment which the head of department and her team have created. Exercise books and folders show that students take a pride in their work. Displays in classrooms and on corridors are lively and eye catching and they reflect the enthusiasm of the students and their willingness to commit themselves to their studies and to produce work of a high standard.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in history is good and this enables students to make good progress.

- Teachers are knowledgeable, passionate about the subject and are keen for students to do well. Students recognise this and respond positively to the challenge. Relationships are good. Students very much appreciate that teachers are always available for advice and help.
- Lessons are well planned, involve a range of activities and move at a brisk pace. Learning objectives and outcomes are shared with students

and opportunities are routinely taken towards the end of lessons to review what has been learned.

- Work is thoroughly marked and comments give guidance on how students have done and what they need to do to improve. Students know their levels and targets and can explain their individual areas for improvement.
- Assessment is accurate but the department acknowledges that more work needs to be done in developing assessment procedures particularly at Key Stage 3.
- Work in history contributes much to the development of good literacy skills. Students enjoy discussions which are a regular feature of lessons and the emphasis in all year groups upon developing opportunities for speaking and listening, and upon extended writing, also help to explain why standards are high.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements and the demands of examination specifications. During the current academic year the department has undertaken a major review of the curriculum at Key Stage 3. New schemes of work are being written which identify themes as well as topics and issues.
- Key Stage 4 students are engaged by the topics they have studied in the Modern World History course and can articulate what they have learned and its importance with clarity and with appropriate evidence.
- Good links are made to other areas of the curriculum, notably to citizenship through the study of such topics as the differences between voting systems in the early nineteenth century and today, and an investigation of slavery, civil rights and racism.
- Suggested lesson plans provide a useful basis for teachers to prepare their lessons.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in history are good.

- Although the acting head of department has been in post for less than a year, she has done much to create a team spirit and to introduce some important initiatives especially in relation to the curriculum and the schemes of work.
- Self evaluation is good and there is a commitment to improvement and to a clear and appropriate direction on how the subject should be developed in the future. The department is aware, though, that more work needs to be done in developing both schemes of work and assessment procedures.
- The department is well organised and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. History teachers have high expectations and these aspirations are being translated effectively into practice in the classroom.

- A newly qualified teacher benefits from good support and from the positive ethos in the department. Good practice is shared, and the students comment on how much they appreciate the way history teachers do all they can to support them and to provide good lessons and resources.
- GCSE results are thoroughly analysed. However, there is no similar analysis of data at Key Stage 3. As a result, the opportunity is missed to include the outcomes of that review in future departmental planning.

Subject issue: ICT

The use of ICT in history is satisfactory.

- Classrooms have interactive whiteboards and staff use ICT equipment regularly to support learning.
- Students enjoy the use of the whiteboard in teaching for PowerPoint presentations and video clips because this technology brings variety to lessons and helps to motivate and extend knowledge and understanding.
- The department can access laptops and computers available in the school for use with different classes. However, the use of ICT by students in history is limited and opportunities for students to use it are missed, not least because such opportunities are not yet specifically identified in schemes of work.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- In lessons teachers respond well to the needs of different students, including those with learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented, by providing different work, by deploying themselves and teaching assistants effectively, and by giving regular spoken and written encouragement.
- Through the student questionnaire, the students feel consulted and listened to. However, at present this process only involves students in Year 9.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing the development of schemes of work and of assessment procedures at Key Stage 3
- ensuring that there are more opportunities for students to use ICT
- analysing student performance data at Key Stage 3 and using it to inform planning in the department
- developing the student voice by extending the student questionnaire to all year groups.

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

Scott Harrison
Her Majesty's Inspector