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10 June 2008

Mr K Wright
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wright

Ofsted survey inspection programme – history

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Monday 02 June 2008 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 provision for gifted and talented pupils.

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 yourself, the coordinator for history and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are excellent.

- Attainment on entry is above average and pupils of all abilities make excellent progress in developing their historical understanding and skills, such as analysing photographs of the local area in their local history work.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent in history. Pupils say they think history is 'fun' and that they like learning about changes in the past because this 'helps them to understand the present'. They behave very well in lessons and help each other out when necessary.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about the past and use examples from a wide period of time to support their general thinking about the importance of history as a subject.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent.

- Teachers develop excellent relationships with pupils. Lessons are planned with great care to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are taken into account and that all pupils can engage in stimulating activities. Class group work is lively and productive and pupils' feedback to the whole class is communicated succinctly and cogently.
- Learning objectives and expectations are shared with classes so that no one gets left behind in lessons.
- Assessment procedures are effective and enable teachers to support and guide pupils well. Teachers constantly communicate to pupils what they expect from different groups and praise those who meet their objectives well.
- Teaching assistants are used extremely well to support pupils with learning difficulties.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and has recently been changed to enable the topics to suit better the needs of the Foundation Stage in the school.
- There is a good emphasis on the key elements of history and pupils are introduced effectively to key historical concepts, such as change over time.
- There is good enrichment in the form of numerous visits to places of historical interest. The history of the local Malvern Wells community is also an important, and valued, part of the history curriculum.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of history are excellent.

- The subject coordinator has, in a short period of time, worked hard to ensure that planning and lesson activities are consistently of a high standard across the school. This is especially so given the other important responsibilities she has within the school.
- History is reviewed thoroughly and rigorously every three years, but even in intervening years the coordinator makes sure that necessary changes are made, implemented and evaluated adequately. The subject has made excellent progress since history was last inspected.

Subject issue: provision for gifted and talented pupils

- Provision is good. However, the coordinator is aware that further work has to be undertaken to ensure that able history pupils are supported better through sharing best practice with other schools that have

developed this aspect of their work more successfully and over a longer period of time.

- Lessons are planned with the needs of gifted historians in mind but the school has yet to explore how best to use national initiatives in relation to gifted and talented provision to enhance the needs of these individuals further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving further the provision and support for gifted and talented history pupils.

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

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector