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07 July 2008

Mrs J Nesbitt  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Nesbitt

Ofsted survey inspection programme – history

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 June 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 information and communication technology (ICT) in history and on provision for gifted and talented history students.

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 you, a representative group of pupils and the subject leader for history. A scrutiny of relevant documentation and an analysis of pupils' work were also undertaken. No lessons could be observed as history was not being taught.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well. They make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding about Victorian washdays, and about seaside holidays then and now. They examine and ask questions about washday artefacts and know that the study of history entails using a wide range of evidence.

- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of, for example, the invasion by the Vikings and the life of Henry VIII.
- At both key stages, pupils are soundly developing their chronological understanding. However, the development of the pupils' wider historical skills, particularly in Key Stage 2, is not extensive enough.

### Quality of teaching and learning of history

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good features.

- In Key Stage 1, the teaching and learning are firmly rooted in National Curriculum requirements and pupils' work is explicitly assessed against these requirements. A good range of historical evidence is used in the teaching and learning.
- The needs of all abilities are planned for and the more able, for example, are challenged through the setting of extended writing activities or independent research work, which the pupils say they enjoy. The use of more open-ended tasks enables some pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and some helpful comments are written for them. However, the marking in Key Stage 2 does not always identify to the pupils how they can improve their work and teachers do not routinely set them targets for improvement.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is generally satisfactory.

- The curriculum is broad. However, it lacks balance as the coverage of some aspects in Key Stage 2, for example local history, is limited. The school has begun to address this through a review of its two-year planning cycle and it is reorganising the history study units being taught.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by visits to some places of historical interest, for example Sulgrave Manor and the local toy museum. Pupils say how much they enjoy such visits.

### Leadership and management of history

The leadership and management of history are generally satisfactory.

- The subject leader has responsibility for leading two other subjects and the time she can devote to history is limited.
- The subject leader monitors whole-school planning in history, scrutinises pupils' work and has recently led three staff meetings on the subject. However, she has not been able to observe any teaching because of budgetary constraints within this small school.
- The subject leader has not attended any recent training in the subject or visited any other schools to identify good practice.

- There are good assessment systems for tracking pupils' progress across the school. Underachievers are quickly identified and appropriate action is taken.

Subject issue: ICT

The use of ICT within history is satisfactory.

- The school has a broad range of resources in ICT which are regularly used. These include specialist provision in the ICT suite and the use of digital cameras. There are additional computers in every classroom, with a laptop which is linked to the interactive whiteboard.
- Pupils enjoy working on computers and they say they enjoy undertaking historical research on the Internet. They are aware that not all sources on the Internet are reliable.

Subject issue: provision for gifted and talented pupils in history

The provision for gifted and talented pupils in history is satisfactory.

- Day-to-day planning takes into account the needs of all abilities of pupils. One pupil has been identified as gifted in history and the class teacher plans appropriate extension activities for this pupil.

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

- ensure that all curricular requirements at Key Stage 2 are fully met
- broaden pupils' skills in history across all ages
- ensure that marking helps the pupils to improve their work
- ensure that leadership and management in history are strengthened.

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

Champak Chauhan  
Her Majesty's Inspector