

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 0207 421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



21 November 2008

Mrs J Lord
Langham CofE (Controlled) Primary
School
1 Burley Road
Langham
Oakham
LE15 7HY

Dear Mrs Lord

Ofsted survey inspection programme – history

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 November 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 upon information and communication technology (ICT) in history and provision for gifted and talented history 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 staff and pupils, a scrutiny of relevant documentation, an analysis of pupils' work and the observation of two lessons and a whole-school assembly.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- Pupils make good progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding. Children in the Foundation Stage are developing a good understanding of the passage of time and how things change over time. As they get older, pupils can accurately put events in chronological order, for example the events surrounding the Great Fire of London in 1666. Pupils in Year 6 have an excellent understanding of soldiers' lives during the First World War and the importance of Remembrance Day.

- Although pupils are developing some skills well, for example chronological understanding, their wider historical skills in the use of historical evidence and the interpretation of history are underdeveloped.
- Pupils are highly motivated. In the assembly observed, a significant number of pupils had brought family medals, letters, photographs and a steel helmet from the two world wars. They confidently explained to the whole school the importance of these mementos to their families. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and they work well with each other and with the adults. They maintain their concentration. The pupils' behaviour is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of history

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

- Lessons are planned in great detail and take into account the needs of all abilities.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and their questioning is briskly paced. Pupils respond well to this because it stimulates their creativity and encourages them to write with feeling about, for example, the experiences of ordinary soldiers during the First World War.
- Lessons are characterised by an excellent and productive learning environment. Pupils know the routines and expectations of their teachers and other staff.
- The needs of individuals are known well to the staff. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the intensive adult support that is offered to them.
- The use of time is excellent. Activities are well paced. Good whole class teaching points are made to inject pace to the learning and to ensure that any misunderstandings are cleared up. Good oral feedback is regularly offered to individual pupils and to the whole class.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and some helpful comments are made to them on how to improve it. Pupils are also given an indication of which levels they are working at or towards.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The school is implementing a new, two-year cycle of curriculum planning which focuses more on developing pupils' creativity.
- The curriculum for history is broad and meets requirements. Pupils say how much they enjoy studying the wide range of topics covered. There are some good links with other subjects, for example literacy, where pupils are taught to write poetry about the First World War.
- The curriculum is enriched by visits to a large number of places of historical interest. This includes visits in Langham for local history, Rutland Museum, Duxford Imperial War Museum and Rockingham Castle.

- Pupils' experiences are enhanced by the use of external speakers who come into school to talk about, for example, school life in the past or about military history.

Leadership and management of history

The leadership and management of history are good.

- The subject leader provides good leadership and direction for the subject and she has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The subject leader has good oversight of provision through monitoring planning, scrutinising pupils' work and the observation of some lessons.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and curriculum coverage, and record this on a tracking sheet. However, this information is not routinely passed on to the subject leader so she does not always have a whole-school view of pupils' progress or the development of their historical skills across the school.

Subject issue: ICT

The provision and use of ICT are good.

- All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and teachers make good use of these in the teaching and learning.
- Pupils are competent users of ICT. Older pupils are able to use spreadsheets and can download information from the Internet. Some pupils use the Internet for in-depth research, for example about Queen Victoria or Ancient Egypt.

Subject issue: gifted and talented history pupils

The provision for gifted history pupils is good.

- The school has some highly able and gifted historians who are interested in researching the lives of local people who were involved in the First World War. Some valuable research work, involving the use of primary and secondary sources, has been undertaken by Year 6 pupils on the life of a local soldier who was killed in 1915. This work has included the extensive interrogation of census data from 1901.
- The needs of all such pupils are met through the planning of appropriate extension work and/or the setting of in-depth research work, which the pupils enjoy.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that pupils' wider historical skills are more coherently and consistently developed
- ensuring that pupils' progress in history and the development of their historical skills across the school are monitored and evaluated more rigorously.

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