

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



03 April 2009

Ms K Heffer
Acting Headteacher
Woodlea Primary School
Atholl Road
Whitehill
Bordon
GU35 9QX

Dear Ms Heffer

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 25 March 2009 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 how effectively geography teaching and the curriculum promotes community cohesion.

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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is satisfactory with good features.

Achievement and standards

Both achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

- Geography themes are selected to provide interest and generate enthusiasm. As a result, most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- In Reception, children explore some features of their school and local environment, are able to draw simple maps and have compared a different locality by visiting Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Bordon fire

station. This work is linked appropriately to other areas of the curriculum which help develop and reinforce children's skills.

- In Years 1 and 2, pupils are able to recognise some human and physical features in their locality and consolidate previously learned skills, such as using and drawing maps. They develop their fieldwork proficiency by comparing and contrasting Alice Holt and Jubilee Parks, recording their findings in a variety of ways. The study of rainforests helps pupils to investigate beyond their immediate locality and begin to consider global issues.
- This secure foundation is built on appropriately in Years 3 and 4. Further first hand experiences enables pupils to develop their questioning and research skills and refine further their fieldwork abilities. For example, the visit to Winchester helps pupils to understand similarities and differences between two different shopping areas.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can identify the features of coastal erosion following their visit to West Wittering. Work on Chembakolli and Kenya helps pupils to compare and contrast differing localities and increase their understanding of global issues, but these are not taught in sufficient depth.
- Pupils are keen and interested in their work. Their behaviour is good and they respond well to clear classroom expectations. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.

Quality of teaching and learning of geography

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

- In lessons observed, teachers' planned thoroughly and structured their lessons well with a broad range of activities. Learning objectives were made clear at the beginning of lessons and suitably recapped at appropriate times. Most lessons built sequentially on prior learning and plenaries were generally used to good effect to summarise what had been achieved.
- Most pupils were helped to increase and consolidate new learning in a variety of interesting ways. Learning techniques were carefully selected to generate interest and enthusiasm which extended and challenged pupils' thinking well. Pupils responded well to the interesting activities presented to them.
- In all lessons, good opportunities were provided to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.
- Occasionally, too much teacher talk resulted in pupils being seated for too long. This slowed down the pace of the lesson, leading some pupils to disengage with their learning.
- Scrutiny of books and work shows that activities appropriately meet the needs of pupils and over time most make satisfactory progress. Challenge and extension activities are becoming more evident for higher attaining pupils.

- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) and visual resources by teachers. These activities provide additional interest, help bring the subject to life and promote enjoyment. Pupils use an appropriate range of ICT resources such as using the internet, digital cameras and programmable toys to support their learning.
- Assessment is undertaken at the end of each unit against agreed success criteria. However, this is not matched to national curriculum outcomes. Similarly, although the school has a portfolio of assessed work, it is also not related to the national curriculum level descriptors. Therefore teachers do not have an accurate view of where pupils get to at the end of each unit compared with national expectations.
- Marking is generally good and usually informs pupils well about how they can improve.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with good features.

- The geography curriculum has appropriate breadth and balance in the main. Planning is suitably detailed and designed to build on prior learning. However, some skills are not sufficiently developed throughout the school.
- In addition, the school knows that pupils' knowledge and understanding of places and significant environments beyond the United Kingdom, although taught at regular intervals, are not covered in sufficient depth.
- Pupils' understanding of their own locality is good. Through their Eco-School's work, pupils have an excellent awareness of the need to reduce, reuse and recycle. There is a strong emphasis on environmental change and sustainable development throughout the school. The school's grounds are used very well to promote and support this work.
- There are good cross-curricular links with other subjects, particularly English, history, mathematics and art. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils presented their completed coastal work in a variety of interesting and creative ways.
- Fieldwork experiences around the school, Blackmoor Farm, Petersfield and Minstead are valued highly and contribute positively to the subject and pupils' learning.
- Geography displays in some classrooms are interesting and help to enhance the planned curriculum. Key geographical vocabulary is promoted in some classes and this is used appropriately to support teaching and learning.

Leadership and management of geography

Leadership and management of geography are good.

- An appropriate range of monitoring and evaluation strategies ensure that the subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths in the subject and the areas which need further development.

- An annual report is prepared and this summarises accurately strengths and areas of development.
- Self-evaluation has been used to produce an accurate and appropriate plan of action. However, it does not identify clearly when and how the actions will be monitored and with whom the outcomes will be shared.
- Resources for the subject have been evaluated and new maps and atlases have been purchased to replace outdated stock.
- The Eco-School's work is well led and managed. The subject leader is aware of current developments in geography by accessing information and training from the local authority's adviser.

Subject issue

The effectiveness of geography teaching and the curriculum in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory with good features.

- Following appropriate analysis, the school has a good awareness of the issues that face its community. Leaders understand the importance of delivering community cohesion through the geography curriculum.
- A plan has been constructed which identifies a range of activities designed to promote and broaden pupils' awareness beyond their own community. This has explicit links to the subject. However, it does not yet indicate how the impact of this work will be monitored and evaluated. In addition, community cohesion is not yet identified explicitly within geography policy.
- A good range of opportunities are provided throughout the school to learn about local issues. Teaching programmes help broaden pupils' understanding of the world beyond Bordon, however pupils' understanding is often superficial because issues have not been explored in sufficient depth.
- A good range of environmental themes are taught. Activities such as 'Trailblazer' and 'Helping Hands' successfully raise pupils' awareness to a wide range of ecological, sustainability and global issues.
- Relationships are good. Positive interactions between all learners and staff are successfully encouraged.

Areas for improvement

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

- link end of unit assessments and the portfolio of annotated work to the national curriculum level descriptors in order to have an accurate view of standards and progress in the subject throughout the school
- provide increased opportunities to develop pupils' geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of places and significant environments beyond the United Kingdom in sufficient depth
- monitor and evaluate the impact of community cohesion on pupils' awareness and understanding of places beyond their own locality and use the outcomes to further refine teaching, learning and the curriculum.

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

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector