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Mr B Roffey
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Dear Mr Roffey

Ofsted 2008-09 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 January 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

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 pupils' work and observation of three lessons and an assembly.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a good understanding of how people help each other. This extends beyond the classroom to learning about institutions such as the fire and animal protection services. However, there is little evidence that this work is progressed into Key Stage 2 to explore a wider range of voluntary and community bodies or pressure groups.
- Pupils have generally good knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. This is reinforced in science, geography and English and through recycling in school. Pupils' knowledge of local and national democratic institutions, rules, laws, human rights and the role of the media, is more limited. Pupils undertake some work on rules in

the classroom but this is not effectively translated to wider society or to how laws are made. As work in citizenship is not formally assessed and not all issues are addressed in both key stages it, is difficult to identify progress.

- Pupils have some understanding of cultural diversity. In Key Stage 2 they study life in India, including some aspects of Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Pupils in Year 3 are developing their awareness of French culture by writing to pen pals. All have learned about the Chinese New Year and aspects of African culture from visitors to the school.
- Through the school council, pupils participate in decision-making about real issues affecting the school and local community. Many engage in active citizenship as playground buddies or junior playground leaders, and through charity fundraising.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- In Key Stage 1 teachers skilfully encourage pupils to share their opinions and begin to recognise choices. Teachers understand well how to deal with sensitive issues and the pupils engage well with the lessons.
- In Key Stage 2, teachers use a range of approaches including circle time. However, pupils have too few opportunities to work independently, exercise initiative and develop their oral communication skills. Too much of the classroom discourse is teacher dominated allowing little time to explore in depth, debate or discuss, topical issues. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, do not make as much progress as they should. Teaching assistants work effectively with learners requiring extra help.
- Insufficient access to computers means that pupils have to share. Although they do so cooperatively, it hampers their individual creativity and independent learning.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The citizenship curriculum is satisfactory overall. Some aspects such as environmental awareness are well covered. Good links between subjects has resulted in pupils' good knowledge, skills and understanding in this area. However, key areas of the citizenship curriculum such as human rights, how democracy works, rules and laws, how the media presents information, how people help each other through voluntary and community groups and Britain's diversity, are only touched upon.
- The school's self evaluation and improvement planning relates much more to personal, social and health education than to citizenship aspects. There are plans for more community cohesion work through national and international school links but these are at an early stage. With the exception of environmental education, there is little scope for revisiting topics to build deeper understanding and develop skills.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory.

- School policies demonstrate an understanding of the requirements, and action planning indicates satisfactory capacity to improve. However, many developments in citizenship in the school are too recent to have made an impact on standards. There is no designated subject leader for citizenship, and monitoring of teaching and learning are at an early stage.
- The school's self evaluation highlights the need to do more work on democracy and diversity but overestimates how well citizenship is established in the school. Evaluation and review does not routinely involve parents and members of the school community, and the governing body need to be better briefed about the requirements of the programme.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring gaps in the curriculum are addressed
- providing more opportunities for pupils to research debate and discuss topical issues
- providing more opportunities for independent learning and creativity
- ensuring improvement planning is informed by sound assessment and evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector