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18 September 2009

Mrs P Hepworth  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hepworth

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: History

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during the visit on 06 July 2009 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 the contribution of history to 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, a scrutiny of relevant documentation, an analysis of pupils' work and the observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average.

- Inspection evidence confirms the school's analysis of standards and that there is a range of attainment with some pupils achieving above average standards and some below. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress.
- Some work is of a high quality; for example, a higher ability pupils' historical diary was lively and interesting.
- The quality of a sample of history-related work in English was good, indicating the effective development of cross-curricular links.

- Work in the sample of pupils' exercise books inspected was sound with pupils showing clear understanding of the topics. However, the range of skills demonstrated was relatively limited, as was the amount of extended writing.
- When encouraged, pupils' recall and understanding was sound. However, it was not easy for them to remember significant, straightforward detail and sometimes there was confusion in their answers.
- Pupils' personal development is well supported by covering relevant issues such as those linked to Remembrance Day.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teachers and pupils share an enthusiasm for the subject. This is clear in discussions with pupils and, for example, in teachers' willingness to organise visits and events, such as the Victorian Day and Brunel Week.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively, for example in relation to Year 4's work on Egypt, and there are many examples of pupils and teachers enjoying their learning, for example on visits and when exploring topics such as mummification.
- In the good lesson inspected there was much excitement as children accurately located people and objects of their choice on a timeline on the floor.
- The challenge for teachers is now to consider carefully the school's own analysis of standards achieved in the subject and to improve them.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is in flux. The school is slowly feeling its way to what it calls a 'creative curriculum' by establishing closer links between subjects. Though still developing, the links between history and other subjects are successful.
- The history topics which are currently being taught are sound but they have little coherence one to the other and do not adequately reflect the school's aims for the subject, most notably to help pupils understand the world in which they live.

### Leadership and management

The leadership and management of history are satisfactory although there are many good qualities.

- The leader of the subject and her deputy are enthusiastic and dedicated both to pupils and to the subject. They have excellent professional relationships with staff.
- Self evaluation is good. The subject leader evaluates the work of pupils at the end of the year. This is done accurately and the subsequent

data analysis is clear. The subject leader and her deputy are already considering how best to ensure a more regular and pragmatic supply of information on pupils' performance so as to help identify how to improve standards. Differences in performance between boys and girls have already been identified and action has been taken.

- Both leaders are keen supporters of the 'creative curriculum' and have worked with colleagues to explore possibilities and put them into practice within the parameters of the present curriculum. They have just begun to explore possibilities in the context of deciding what should be taught to meet both the aims for the subject and those of the 'creative curriculum'.
- The headteacher and other senior managers provide valuable support for the development of the subject.

Subject issue: the contribution of history to community cohesion

The contribution of history to community cohesion is satisfactory.

- Hitherto, community cohesion has not been a conscious focus for history, although topics covered by the curriculum link to contemporary local and national issues.
- In circle time and in personal, social and health education, the historical dimension to current issues is often covered.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising standards in history, in particular by the creation of a more coherent history curriculum which fully addresses the school's aims for the subject and contributes to the 'creative curriculum'.

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

Paul Armitage  
Additional Inspector