

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mr N Raynor
Headteacher
Glebe Junior School
Hamlet Lane
South Normanton
Alfreton
Derbyshire
DE55 2JB

Dear Mr Raynor

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 June 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 groups of pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of part of seven lessons, observation of a variety of Young Leaders' activities and observation of the school council meeting.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be good with some outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in the subject are good.

- Pupils display good understanding of many of the key aspects of citizenship. In particular, they demonstrate good understanding of human rights and responsibilities, justice and fairness.
- Their knowledge and understanding of diversity is good and they show a sensitive awareness of differences in culture and ethnicity and of the need for respect for others.
- Pupils demonstrate emerging understanding of the features of democracy. The well-organised class and school councils are practical illustrations of this and these have helped to reinforce pupils' understanding of democratic processes.

- Pupils show good awareness and understanding of environmental issues and the sustainability of the world's resources. The school holds the bronze and silver Eco awards and are shortly being assessed for the Green Flag award. The Eco Club members are making a significant difference in raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues across the school and the role all pupils can play to improve their environment.
- The personal development of many pupils through active participation in school is outstanding. There is an impressively wide range of opportunities where pupils can take responsible action, lead or support others, for example through supporting learning, taking roles as Sports or Young Leaders, peer tutors, members of class and school councils or as leaders of children's club activities at lunchtime. The school encourages pupils to assume responsibility, make decisions and organise their own activities, which many take up with enthusiasm and maturity.
- Pupils feel they have a voice in school and their opinions and actions make a difference. They appreciate their school and speak proudly of how they continue to improve learning and many aspects of their school's provision. Opportunities to influence or lead activities outside of school are more limited.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers plan in considerable detail to meet the citizenship objectives in their lessons.
- In these lessons, pupils are engaged in varied, relevant and fun activities that interest and motivate them. Teachers use role-play, drama activities and the use of 'talking partners' effectively to stimulate interest when exploring topical issues.
- Teachers demonstrate skilful use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. Resources are attractive and stimulating in encouraging pupils to reflect, form and express their views.
- There are many opportunities for children to discuss, share ideas and voice opinions. They do this readily and confidently. For example, in a Year 6 debate on the advantages and disadvantages of extending Carsington Reservoir, this issue of local concern was debated with understanding and good awareness of the factors surrounding it. Pupils are also encouraged to voice their views on their 'Learning Platform' website and many choose to do so.
- The school recognises that assessment in the subject is under developed at present. In order to be able to track pupils' progress throughout the key stage this is an identified area for improvement.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features.

- Citizenship themes are mapped securely across the PSHE curriculum. These are thoughtfully planned and regularly reviewed and updated.
- Aspects of citizenship are clearly identified across the wider curriculum. There is much good work evident, particularly in history, geography, science, RE, art, music and literacy lessons where citizenship objectives are clearly identified and developed well. These enrich the formal PSHE curriculum significantly. For example, in a successful Year 5 music lesson, pupils enthusiastically explored a Bob Dylan song and considered the use of protest songs as a means of getting one's voice heard. Following this, they gleefully began composing their own songs with interest and understanding.
- The school's extensive extra-curricular and residential programme supports pupils' environmental and cultural awareness. Such trips are maximised in terms of developing pupils' decision-making skills – for instance, Year 4 pupils carefully considered the organisation of their forthcoming trip and independently agreed their dormitory arrangements with sensitive awareness of the needs of others, demonstrating a maturity beyond their years.
- The commitment to give pupils a voice is evident right across school life. The approach to celebrating achievement illustrates this. In the celebration assembly, pupils, having decided their own 'stars of the week' in their classes and having voted and selected these themselves, spoke to the assembly of their reasons for nominating these children for the award. Pupils speak confidently about the skills they feel they are developing and the likely benefits of these, as they get older. Many speak with a sense of pride in their school community and their pleasure in supporting and helping other school members to achieve and enjoy school.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are good.

- The vision for the subject is clear and the school's self-evaluation of its citizenship provision and outcomes is accurate. School leaders are strongly committed to fostering a school ethos that emphasises the value of active and responsible citizenship in the school and in the community. This vision is translated into reality in school.
- There is a strong commitment to help all pupils feel part of a cohesive school community and develop the knowledge, understanding and decision-making skills required in order to make a positive contribution in school. Consequently, the approach is inclusive with all pupils encouraged to participate in and benefit from the citizenship programme.
- Subject leadership is enthusiastic and well organised. A reflective and open-minded approach is evident in reviewing and improving provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing assessment so that pupils' progress over the Key Stage is more easily recognised

- providing increased opportunities for pupils to participate in influencing community issues outside of school. For example, Eco Club members expressed a number of ideas on how their local neighbourhood might be improved.

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

Judith Matharu
Her Majesty's Inspector