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17 March 2010

Mrs S Julyan  
Acting Headteacher  
Torre Church of England Primary School  
Barton Road  
Torquay  
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Dear Mrs Julyan

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 8 March 2010 to look at work in geography.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit focused on how effectively geography teaching and the curriculum promote 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; observation of two lessons; and a 'learning walk' in Key Stage 2.

The overall effectiveness of geography is outstanding.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is outstanding.

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and understanding of the world below those found typically for three-year-olds.
- Pupils make consistently good or better progress as they move through the school because they are taught well and they reach standards that are above national expectations. They enjoy their geography lessons and field trips and talk enthusiastically about their work. In the lessons observed, all pupils were busy and involved in their activities.

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of their local area and of the localities studied as part of the curriculum. They confidently communicate their findings from enquiry-based themes, offering sophisticated explanations for their answers.
- Pupils behave well and this makes a significant contribution to their learning, especially when working in groups. Pupils are able to use information from a variety of sources effectively and reach conclusions based upon clear consideration of evidence through high-quality discussions with peers.

### Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching of geography is outstanding.

- Teachers have strong geographical knowledge and high expectations of pupils' progress and conduct in all lessons. They are very confident and competent teachers of geography.
- Teachers question pupils well and use a wide range of resources effectively, including information and communication technology (ICT), to stimulate discussions and enhance learning.
- Teachers plan lessons well and use a range of assessment and monitoring information to ensure activities meet all pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to ensure all pupils can access the work, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers' oral feedback in lessons provides pupils with high-quality guidance on how to improve their work. Marking has recently improved and provides clear guidance to pupils.

### Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The school has worked effectively to develop the geography curriculum. Plans meet statutory requirements and strong links have been made between geography and other subjects such as mathematics, ICT and English. This provides pupils with relevant contexts and raises their levels of interest through innovative themes such as 'Chocolate' and 'Around the World in 40 Days'.
- Most geographic skills are developed well and planned in sequence to provide a clear structure for pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- Curriculum planning for fieldwork opportunities is currently less developed than for other aspects of the geography curriculum. Although pupils already have some field visits, leaders recognise that provision could be improved to give pupils more high-quality, first-hand experiences.
- The school council is provided with regular and effective opportunities to improve the school and wider environment. It has successfully

implemented an 'Eco-Code' throughout the school to reduce its carbon footprint and to ensure the school site and local area are free from litter.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is outstanding.

- The coordinator rigorously checks pupils' written work, teachers' planning, assessment information and observes teaching directly to inform good-quality development plans and raise standards effectively. Plans are evaluated regularly and targets are met consistently.
- The geography development plan clearly focuses on improving the geography curriculum. It is used well by leaders to contribute to the high-quality self-evaluation of the provision and outcomes for pupils.
- All staff are supported well by the coordinator and have a positive and proactive approach to new developments in the geography curriculum. The coordinator uses the support from the professional associations effectively to inform teachers of up-to-date themes and ideas.
- The coordinator ensures a reflective approach has developed and all teachers review each geography theme to inform future plans effectively.

## Subject issue

The effectiveness of geography teaching and the curriculum in promoting community cohesion is good with some outstanding elements.

- Pupils are aware of the differences between their local area and other communities. They are tolerant and understanding of people's differences. As a result of the interesting themes covered and the effective teaching they receive, pupils have developed a strong awareness of what it is like to live in different places.
- Pupils demonstrate an excellent and empathetic understanding of the social and economic inequalities that exist between rich and poor people in developing countries and the possible reasons for these. For example, in their study of Mumbai, Key Stage 2 pupils were able to suggest plausible reasons why poor people migrate to cities to improve their life chances and how the gap between rich and poor could widen in the future.
- Teachers plans are evaluated and modified effectively to ensure aspects of community cohesion are taught well.
- The school has made links to other schools around the world over the last few years. However, these links are currently less effective in promoting community cohesion for the whole school. Senior leaders are in the process of establishing new links to further develop pupils' understanding of diversity.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that pupils are provided with more regular opportunities for fieldwork and that their fieldwork skills are developed in a logical sequence

- strengthening the links with other schools to further develop pupils' understanding of diversity.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop geography in the school.

As I explained previously, 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

Liam Trippier  
Her Majesty's Inspector