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Mrs C Brown
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Brown

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: geography

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 13 May 2010 to look at work in geography.

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 five parts of lessons and a learning walk.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and understanding of the world found typically for most four-year-old pupils. A few enter with levels above those found typically.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because they are taught well and they reach standards that are above national expectations. However, higher attaining pupils are capable of reaching even more challenging targets.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk enthusiastically about their work. All were engaged in meaningful and appropriate activities in the parts of lessons observed.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the localities studied as part of the curriculum. They demonstrate particularly strong locational knowledge and

a good understanding of localities in other countries. Their knowledge and understanding develop well as they move through the school.

- Pupils use a variety of maps well to investigate localities. They communicate their findings clearly using information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils behave well and this makes a significant contribution to their learning, especially when working cooperatively in groups.

Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Teachers have good geographical knowledge and ensure pupils make good progress in all lessons. Teachers use their wealth of high-quality experiences and good geographical understanding in lessons to enable them to support pupils well.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively based on curriculum unit plans. They improve the plans considerably with good resources and the effective use of ICT to stimulate discussions and enhance learning.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils.
- Teachers' oral feedback in lessons provides pupils with high-quality guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils reflect on their learning regularly and any preconceptions are tackled well by teachers.
- Marking is regular and positive but does not provide pupils with specific guidance on how to improve their geographical understanding.
- Pupils are assessed regularly to ensure they are reaching their potential. Useful unit assessments and a portfolio of up-to-date work provide staff with effective guidance for their practice and important information for senior leaders to devise plans.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a good context for work in English and ICT. However, the main units of work are relatively dated and the curriculum is frequently less relevant to pupils' current lives.
- Teachers have worked hard and effectively to ensure the curriculum is adequate. Their strong teaching and good geographical knowledge have contributed to its satisfactory quality and the positive impact that it has on pupils' achievement and enjoyment.
- Environmental and topical issues, such as recycling and the recent volcanic eruption in Iceland, are discussed well by most pupils. They understand why the eruption happened and the impact on people around the world.
- Currently, fieldwork skills are not developed in an explicit and logical sequence. The progression of geographical knowledge, understanding and

skills is satisfactory. However, the curriculum has rightly been identified as an area for development.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is satisfactory.

- Due to the long-term absence of the headteacher, recent opportunities for monitoring geography have been limited in this small school. However, action planning for geography, using the school's self-evaluation procedures, is based on appropriate priorities identified by the current subject leader.
- Senior leaders have high expectations for staff and pupils and outcomes are consistently good.
- The school has made useful contact with the professional associations to improve the geography curriculum and has suitable plans in place to do so.
- Resources are managed effectively and are of adequate quality. Staff ensure that school resources are often enhanced with their own. This impacts positively on the quality of pupils' learning and progress in most lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing the geography coordinator with regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate the provision
- ensuring the geography curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils more closely
- providing purposeful opportunities for fieldwork to ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

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 under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Liam Trippier
Her Majesty's Inspector