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Mrs J Symes  
Headteacher  
Victoria Road Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Symes

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 14 June 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of parts of four lessons and a learning walk throughout the school.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and understanding of the world below that found typically for four-year-olds. Some pupils enter with knowledge and skills well below expectations.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because they are taught well and reach the nationally expected standards. However, higher attaining pupils are capable of reaching even more challenging targets.
- Pupils enjoy their geography lessons and fieldtrips. In all lessons observed, they were enthusiastic and fully engaged in relevant activities. Younger pupils particularly enjoyed play experiences to develop their knowledge of countries involved in the World Cup.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the different localities they study. They develop a good sense of place and older pupils are developing good locational knowledge.
- Pupils use a variety of resources effectively to investigate different localities. Pupils are able to present their findings well using information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils behave well in lessons and this makes a good contribution to their learning, especially when they work in pairs to share their new knowledge and understanding.

### Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Teachers have good geographical knowledge and high expectations for pupils' progress and conduct in all lessons. They are competent teachers of geography.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively based on good-quality curriculum plans and useful assessment information. They provide activities that engage and motivate pupils at different ability levels and they recognise that pupils capable of reaching the higher levels require further challenge.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively.
- Pupils receive good-quality oral and written feedback. They are given clear guidance on how to improve their work in most classes. Some marking in pupils' workbooks is exemplary.
- Pupils are assessed regularly to ensure their good progress and to inform future lesson plans. A useful portfolio of assessed work is kept to provide staff with effective guidance for their practice.

### Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- The geography curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is relevant and interesting for pupils and stimulating topics are taught to explore sophisticated themes effectively, such as global poverty and inequality.
- Strong links have been made with other subjects such as English, mathematics and ICT. This provides pupils with relevant contexts and raises their interest.
- Geographical skills are developed well and are planned in sequence to provide a clear structure for pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- The Eco-Council and gardening club provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to contribute positively to their community. Pupils are motivated to save energy and take an active role in improving their local environment.

- Partnerships between the school and other organisations provide good opportunities for pupils to develop and practice their fieldwork skills in relevant contexts.

### Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- Leaders and managers effectively communicate high expectations for geography throughout the school. Staff are keen to develop their knowledge and skills and are open to new ideas.
- Through a wide range of rigorous monitoring activities, including the regular and direct observation of geography lessons, future development plans are precise and relevant.
- Together with the geography coordinator, you have a clear and accurate view of the good provision of geography across the school. You know the subject's strengths and areas for development.
- Training opportunities are sought effectively by the coordinator through good links with the local authority and the professional associations. Staff are kept up to date with new ideas and the provision is continually improving.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment further, particularly for the most able, by precisely planning tasks that provide high levels of challenge
- ensuring a consistent approach to marking pupils' work so that it is of outstanding quality and provides pupils with high-quality geographical feedback and greater challenge.

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