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Mrs W Rose  
Headteacher  
St John's CofE Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Rose

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: history**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 24 June 2010 to look at work in history.

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 you, staff and pupils; a scrutiny of relevant documentation; an analysis of pupils' work; observation of two lessons; and a learning walk in a further three.

The overall effectiveness of history is satisfactory.

#### **Achievement in history**

Achievement in history is satisfactory.

- From relatively low starting points, pupils make sound progress across the school and attain standards that are broadly average. In Year 2, for example, they know the importance of the work of Charles Darwin and Florence Nightingale. In Year 6, pupils are developing their understanding of aspects of the Second World War.
- At all ages, pupils are developing their historical skills well. They ask appropriate questions about artefacts and can make various inferences from them. They are developing their chronological understanding well through the good use of timelines.
- Pupils are enhancing their literacy skills through the study of history. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, can write extensively, and for

different audiences and purposes. The average and lower attainers, however, do not yet write extensively and to the required depth.

- Pupils' behaviour is invariably good and often outstanding. They are interested in the subject, maintain their concentration and ask pertinent questions. Many commented on how much they enjoy learning the subject.

### **Quality of teaching in history**

The quality of teaching in history is satisfactory with some good features.

- Lessons are usually planned in some detail and the roles of the teaching assistants and the pupils they are supporting are explicitly identified.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this well in their questioning to extend pupils' understanding, for instance about the development of apartheid in South Africa.
- Time is managed efficiently, leading to a brisk pace in learning.
- The good features of teaching also include a good learning environment, where pupils are encouraged to develop their research skills and their independent learning, and good relationships between adults and pupils.
- The level of challenge is usually appropriate. However, specific targets and learning outcomes for different groups of pupils are not routinely identified in the planning.
- Work is marked regularly, with detailed evaluative comments. Pupils find these valuable and say it helps them to improve their work.

### **Quality of the curriculum in history**

The quality of the curriculum in history is good.

- The curriculum is broad and meets requirements.
- Curriculum provision is strong. Cross-curricular links with other subjects are good, for example with English and art. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used regularly by both staff and pupils. This enables pupils to enhance their skills in interrogating websites, evaluating evidence and constructing presentations.
- The range of enrichment activities is good. Pupils of all ages regularly visit places of historical interest, including Eyam, Sudbury Hall, Eden Camp and Beth Shalom. Visitors come into school to talk to pupils about aspects of history and there is some good work in local history, for example about Codnor Castle.
- The curriculum promotes good enjoyment of learning. However, it has not yet fully impacted on enhancing pupils' progress to the same extent.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management in history**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in history is satisfactory.

- The subject is ably led by a subject leader who is supported by a curriculum team.
- The subject leader undertakes a wide range of monitoring and evaluation activities, including scrutinising planning, observing lessons, discussing issues with pupils and ensuring that resources are available for all staff. This work is supported well by other members of the curriculum team, including the deputy headteacher. Self-evaluation is accurate.
- The work of the team is developing well but its impact is not yet fully apparent in enhancing pupils' progress. However, good initial work has started in monitoring pupils' progress in history across the school. This data analyses performance by different groups so that trends can be identified and appropriate action taken.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that pupils' skills in writing are extended, especially for the lower and average attainers
- ensuring that lesson planning routinely identifies specific targets and learning outcomes for different groups of pupils and that progress towards meeting these is evaluated routinely.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop history 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

**Champak Chauhan**  
**Additional Inspector**