

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



7 July 2010

Mr D Hayward  
Headteacher  
Turnfurlong Junior School  
Turnfurlong Lane  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP21 7PL

Dear Mr Hayward

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 25 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 nominated staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils demonstrate a good standard in their work. Their geographical knowledge is a notable strength: pupils have a well developed 'sense of place' based on good locational knowledge.
- Pupils' basic understanding of human and physical processes is sound. Year 5 pupils, for example, were able to describe similarities between local and exotic habitats and suggest reasons for the differences. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the causes of water shortages and its impact on people.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons and their work shows clear evidence of progress over time. In the lessons observed, the quality of learning was good or outstanding. Learning is challenging and motivating. Teachers are careful to develop the pupils' understanding of the different contexts that

they study so that they become familiar with geographical terminology, such as countries, continents and hemispheres, and concepts such as scale, direction and map symbols.

- Geography makes a strong contribution to pupils' skills and wider personal development. They develop positive attitudes to cultural, moral and social issues and are able to express views about contemporary issues.
- Surveys and fieldwork promote pupils' questioning and enquiry skills well.
- Pupils are curious about the world around them and develop a sense of responsibility for their local and global environment and empathy for others.
- Pupils enjoy geography. They respond positively to the lively topics and stimulating resources. The best lessons encourage a degree of independence and creativity and steer them towards investigating issues rather than researching facts.
- Pupils make some use of information and communication technology (ICT) in their investigations, but have few opportunities to use it independently.
- Pupils' very good behaviour is a positive factor in their good learning and progress in geography. They sustain their concentration, work well together and show real enthusiasm when volunteering answers or working independently.

#### Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- Lessons are sharply focused, well structured and planned carefully. Teachers make good use of a wide range of stimulating resources, including multimedia and ICT, to engage pupils' interest and develop their knowledge.
- Teachers have high expectations of what different groups of pupils will achieve in each lesson, and ensure that all are suitably challenged. They plan a good variety of tasks, with well-structured activities that give pupils opportunities to develop their ideas and explore issues for themselves.
- Assessment in geography is good. Although teachers do not routinely assign levels to pupils' work, they know their different aptitudes and use this to set work that is suitably challenging.
- Marking is a notable strength. Teachers identify precisely the gains that pupils make in terms of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills, and are specific about what can be improved.
- In lessons, teachers skilfully use a range of techniques to assess whether pupils understand the work, including careful questioning, so that the pace of learning is adapted accordingly.

#### Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is structured carefully and reviewed routinely. Planning for Key Stage 2 is imaginative and takes account of the increased emphasis on topical issues. Pupils investigate a variety of places at different scales and in various contexts to develop knowledge and understanding of local and wider global issues. There is suitable emphasis on how people affect the environment and how they are affected by it.
- Surveys and fieldwork are planned into the schemes of work so that pupils are able to carry out geographical enquiry outside the classroom.
- Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' wider knowledge and interest in the world: the Turnfurlong Teddies travel with the pupils and report back on their adventures; valuable links have been forged with children in Africa and Japan; pupils' interest in the World Cup has been cleverly exploited; and topics are usefully enriched by trips and visiting speakers, such as the rainforest wildlife expert.
- Pupils routinely use a wide range of resources, such as maps, atlases, aerial photographs and information and communication technology.
- The curriculum is creative and links cleverly to other work. Each class is allotted a country so that curricular themes linked to each one are developed in art, design and other subjects.
- Pupils also use geography exercises to consolidate work in literacy, to promote creativity in art, support learning in science and link with other activities, such as raising funds for Water Aid.
- The school's learning environment promotes pupils' work and interest in geography with maps, high-quality displays of geography topics and plenty of World Cup memorabilia.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good and shows satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

- The subject leader guides sensibly the development of the geography making good use of resources and support provided by the local authority consultant.
- Strategies to raise standards in geography have been implemented successfully in recent years, particularly through revisions to make topics more creative.
- Departmental self-evaluation follows the school's format and is suitably rigorous. The subject leader monitors provision effectively across the school and ensures that lesson planning is suitably focused and challenging.

Area for improvement, which we discussed, includes:

- replicating the most imaginative and effective elements of geography observed during the visit so that work in all year groups focuses on developing pupils' understanding of relevant issues.

I hope that 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

Paul Brooker  
Her Majesty's Inspector