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Mr I Cookson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cookson

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 23 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 you and with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and an analysis of pupils' work. There were no geography lessons taking place to observe.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils make good progress to attain standards in line with or above national expectations in geography.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and well behaved. They are enthusiastic and say they enjoy learning about geography. They develop good thinking, mapwork and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This equips them well to undertake independent geographical enquiries.
- Pupils acquire appropriate skills and a wide range of knowledge and understanding about geography. They have well developed locational knowledge and make appropriate use of geographical vocabulary. As a result, pupils use a range of geographical terms with accuracy and have a

good understanding of the names and locations of cities, countries, continents and a range of physical features.

Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching of geography is good.

- Teachers have relevant subject knowledge and understand what constitutes good learning. They motivate and engage pupils in interesting geography lessons, offering appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities and ages. As a result, pupils make good progress in their geographical learning.
- Lessons are well planned and sequenced to ensure progressive, sustained learning, the acquisition of appropriate geographical knowledge, understanding and a range of skills.
- Pupils have opportunities to work collaboratively and independently. They conduct their own investigations, asking and researching their own geographical questions and presenting their findings to others.
- The school has a good range of geographical resources and appropriate use is made of ICT in teaching and learning.
- Teachers evaluate learning and planned assessment opportunities to inform teaching and support pupils' progress, annotating and adjusting their plans to meet individual needs.
- Teachers make effective use of observation and questioning during lessons to re-shape activities and enhance geographical learning.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. They receive good-quality oral and verbal feedback on how to improve their work.
- The school has an accurate view of geographical attainment, in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills, and keeps detailed electronic records of the National Curriculum levels pupils have achieved by the end of each academic year. However, the school does not maintain a portfolio of annotated samples of pupils' geographical work to provide detailed evidence of their attainment.
- Currently, only limited use is made of existing systems for recording pupils' annual summative attainment to monitor pupils' progress and set targets.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- Curriculum planning and schemes of work ensure coverage of statutory requirements and provide a relevant context for geographical learning.
- All groups of pupils, in each of the three mixed-age classes, have equal access to the curriculum, through a well designed two-yearly cycle of planned geographically focused topics, taught in half-termly blocks.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to raise pupils' awareness of a number of local issues. Pupils also demonstrate a good understanding of

life in other parts of the world because of the detailed use of a number of contrasting locality studies, for example, a study of village life in India.

- Pupils make a positive contribution to their own school environment and work with another local school on a number of eco-projects, including recycling and composting.
- Appropriate links are made with other curriculum areas in teachers' planning and good use is made of geography to develop a range of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. For example, pupils have written letters suggesting how local traffic problems could be improved.
- High-quality displays around the school are used well to celebrate the effective geography curriculum and pupils' growing knowledge and understanding of the world.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in geography

The effectiveness of leadership and management in geography is good.

- The subject leader has a clearly defined role and an enthusiasm for teaching geography. She has a clear understanding of progression through her analysis of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with colleagues and pupils as well as her monitoring of displays around the school.
- You and the subject leader work together well to ensure geography has a prominent place in the school's curriculum. The school's good-quality geography policy is also reviewed regularly.
- Effective links with a range of local agencies, including environmental groups, are used well. However, the school has not as yet used the support and resources available from subject associations to provide staff development opportunities for the subject leader.
- The school is continually striving to improve the quality of geography and demonstrates a good capacity to continue to improve its work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing a portfolio of samples of pupils' geographical work, annotated against the National Curriculum levels, to provide detailed evidence of their attainment
- making more effective use of existing systems, which record annual summative attainment data, to monitor pupils' progress and set targets for their learning in geography
- using the support and resources available from subject associations to provide staff development opportunities for the subject leader.

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

Angela Milner
Her Majesty's Inspector