

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 March 2010

Ms J Taylor
Acting Headteacher
Childer Thornton Primary School
New School Lane
Childer Thornton
Ellesmere Port
CH66 1QY

Dear Miss Taylor

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: history

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 January 2010 to look at work in history.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the contribution of history to community cohesion and the development of independent learning 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of history is good.

Achievement in history

Achievement in history is good.

- Attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils of all abilities make good progress in developing their historical skills and understanding. Pupils undertake interesting and stimulating research activities, such as finding out what Vikings actually wore and looked like.
- Teachers encourage pupils to ask good questions about the topics they are studying and the artefacts they are given to handle and analyse.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent in history. Pupils say they think history is 'interesting and makes you think hard'. They like learning about the Egyptians and their way of life as well as life on the home front in

Britain during the Second World War. They enjoy comparing the past with the present and finding out about how the way they live now has been influenced by the past.

- Behaviour is excellent in lessons. Pupils are confident and speak very clearly when they present their ideas to the rest of the class.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about the topics they learn, and have a good understanding of the importance of basing their ideas on available evidence. They like viewing history videos, and using laptops to do their own research.

Quality of teaching in history

The quality of teaching in history is good.

- Teachers and support staff develop excellent relationships with pupils. Lessons are planned very well to ensure that the needs of all pupils are taken into account and that all pupils can engage in the activities. Lessons are lively and pupils talk enthusiastically about their ideas. Teachers give pupils time to expand on their views and to write about them at length.
- Marking is consistently good in pupils' books and indicates how pupils can improve their work. In lessons, teachers constantly communicate their expectations to pupils and give appropriate praise to those who meet their objectives. They do not yet monitor the progress of individual pupils in skills development rigorously enough, but there are good plans to tackle this and new methods are being trialled with two groups.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT), to develop pupils' understanding of topics and enhance their presentations to the class, is excellent.

Quality of the curriculum in history

The quality of the history curriculum is good.

- The curriculum has been planned well so that history topics retain their slot on the timetable while being linked sensibly with other subjects and wider thematic topics.
- There is good emphasis on developing pupils' history skills. They know how to ask good questions about sources and artefacts and are developing their understanding of key history concepts such as change over time.
- The school organises a good range of visits to places of historical importance locally and also invites parents and others to talk to the pupils about their experiences in the past. The pupils say they enjoy these talks.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in history

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of history is good.

- You have temporarily taken responsibility for managing history and have an excellent grasp of the place and importance of history in the school

curriculum. You are ensuring that the good work developed by the history coordinator is maintained and developed further.

- The school has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of subject provision in the school.
- Although time has been created for teachers to review the quality of provision for history in the school, this has not yet extended to enable teachers to observe their colleagues teaching.

Subject issue: the contribution of history to community cohesion

The contribution of history to community cohesion is good.

- Pupils study a wide range of topics which introduce them to different cultures and ways of life, both in this country and around the world. They understand how diverse British society is. History also links well with other subjects from time to time to explore different aspects of society and how different cultures have different values and faiths. Although some of this provision has been assessed, evaluation of community cohesion within history is still in an early stage of development.

Subject issue: the development of independent learning in history

The development of independent learning in history is outstanding.

- Pupils are given many opportunities to plan their own work and to research topics on their own. When working in groups, individual pupils are often challenged to report back on what their group thinks about their given topic. There are many opportunities for pupils to use laptop computers to structure their work. Pupils said how much they enjoyed being challenged to work in these ways.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the monitoring of teaching and learning by enabling teachers to observe each other's history lessons
- embedding the tracking and evaluation of skills in history in all classes.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop history in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector