

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



03 November 2006

Mrs L A Hardman
Headteacher
Bishop Wood C of E School
Frogmore Street
Tring
Hertfordshire
HP23 5AU

Dear Mrs Hardman

Ofsted survey inspection programme – History

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 02 November 2006 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

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

The overall effectiveness of history was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in history are good.

- Attainment on entry to the school is above average and pupils make good progress during their time at the school. The standards of written work are high and this relates directly to the very good standards attained by pupils in English. There is little difference between the standards achieved for girls and boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress with effective targeted support. More able pupils achieve well but could be challenged to do even better.

- Pupils' personal development is good in history. Pupils value their history lessons highly. They are keen and enthusiastic to learn and behaviour in lessons is excellent.

Quality of teaching and learning of history

The quality of teaching and learning in history is good.

- Teachers form good relationships with pupils and adopt a wide range of active strategies to engage and motivate pupils to achieve their best. Pupils are encouraged to work productively both independently and in groups. As a consequence, the quality of class discussions and the interactions between teachers and pupils are good.
- Assessment procedures are developing well although there are areas for further development. The school rightly identifies the need to track and monitor pupils more closely in order to ensure that all pupils including the gifted and talented are appropriately stretched and challenged in all lessons.
- Target setting and marking, though developing satisfactorily, do not yet identify clearly enough how individual pupils can make improvements and attain higher levels.
- Other support and guidance in history are good. Teaching Assistants are used effectively to manage learning for identified groups of students.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school is beginning to create a more flexible history curriculum by listening carefully to the views of pupils and trying to meet their needs better by offering different topics.
- Particular strengths of the curriculum include a focus on literacy and the development of writing skills. Pupils make a particular point of emphasising how much they enjoy their history lessons and the range of topics they study.
- The school correctly identifies that it needs to improve still further opportunities for using ICT, and exploring ways of engaging students more interactively with whiteboards. In addition, the subject leader has rightly identified that pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to handle, and ask questions about, historical artefacts.
- The school has correctly identified the need for history to strengthen its links with other curriculum areas so that more historical aspects can be covered.

Leadership and management of history

Leadership and management in history are good.

- The new subject leader has made a good start in bringing clear direction for the subject in the school and developing good plans for further development. She has worked extremely hard, with the good support of other colleagues, to raise achievement and standards in history. This is beginning to impact positively on key aspects of planning and teaching.
- Subject self-evaluation is good. The school accurately identifies and exemplifies its many strengths and areas for development.

Subject issue - literacy

The subject leader and literacy co-ordinator have placed great emphasis on developing all aspects of literacy in history, not just writing. This focus has contributed strongly to raising standards. These developments have been encouraged and supported by the school in general.

Inclusion

All groups of students make good progress in history as a consequence of the good quality of support and guidance and effective provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- exploring ways of engaging pupils more interactively with whiteboards
- continuing to develop assessment strategies in order to consolidate as well as improve standards of attainment
- exploring ways of providing even more stretch and challenge for able pupils
- strengthening further the links between history and other curriculum areas
- providing more opportunities for pupils to handle and interrogate historical artefacts.

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 Diocesan Director of Education and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector