

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mrs A Newman
Headteacher
Stanwell Fields CofE Primary School
Clare Road
Stanwell
Staines
TW19 7DB

Dear Mrs Newman

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 22 March 2011 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 staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of geography is good.

Achievement in geography

Achievement in geography is good.

- Pupils make good progress from lower than average starting points to attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school has an accurate view of geographical attainment in terms of pupils' knowledge and understanding and has correctly identified that their attainment in terms of geographical skills is not as high as it could be.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding about geography and places they have studied. They use a wide range of geographical vocabulary with accuracy. They enthusiastically engage in good-quality learning activities that help them to learn more about the world around them as well as topical events.

- Pupils are polite, respectful and well behaved and say that they enjoy learning about geography. They particularly value learning about landscapes, other countries, conducting their own fieldwork and researching and presenting their findings to others through the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of teaching of geography

The quality of teaching in geography is good.

- All of the teaching observed was good. Teachers and teaching assistants understand what constitutes good learning in the subject. They motivate and engage pupils in interesting lessons, offering appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of differing abilities. As a result, pupils make good progress in their geographical learning.
- Good-quality questioning involves all pupils and provides opportunities for them to think and confidently share their views and opinions. Pupils have good opportunities to work collaboratively.
- Lessons are planned and sequenced well. Teachers carefully evaluate learning and use assessment opportunities to inform teaching and support pupils' progress.
- The school has an appropriate range of geographical resources and good use is made of ICT in teaching and learning. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher made very effective use of the interactive whiteboard to share a photographic record of pupils' previous work while undertaking a traffic survey. This consolidated learning and ensured that pupils were able to identify and record traffic and parking features on maps and discuss how the local area could be made safer.
- Although books are marked regularly, feedback comments are not always focused sharply on pupils' next steps in geography.
- Teachers keep detailed records of the progress pupils make in their geographical learning in relation to age-related expectations and useful samples of their work. However, these do not as yet contain detailed annotations of National Curriculum levels to aid moderation.

Quality of the curriculum in geography

The quality of the curriculum in geography is good.

- Planning ensures curriculum coverage and provides a relevant context for learning.
- The curriculum is well tailored to meet the needs of pupils in this school community. It places a good emphasis on their acquisition of locational knowledge, the use of the local environment to foster pupils' enthusiasm for learning through first-hand experiences and the use of a number of detailed locality studies in a range of countries.
- The curriculum is enhanced through the use of visits out of school and thematic 'WOW' days at the start of, or at the end of, topics. These

involve visitors and members of the local community in providing interesting and exciting memorable learning experiences.

- The curriculum is flexible and responsive to topical events. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils were able to link their current focus on Africa to the work of Comic Relief and their support for 'Red Nose day'.
- Pupils make a positive contribution to improving their own environment through the work of the school's eco team.
- High-quality displays around the school celebrate the good 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.

- Geography has a prominent place in the school's creative curriculum and the subject is used effectively to promote community cohesion at a variety of scales.
- Subject leadership is provided by a recently formed 'human, social and environmental understanding' team. This consists of a team leader and teacher colleagues from the different key stages. The team has a clearly defined role and much has already been accomplished. This includes an extensive review and monitoring of the revised curriculum; the time allocated to the subject; improvements in assessing and levelling pupils' attainment; monitoring their progress and; a very detailed analysis of the quality of teachers' planning.
- The school has not as yet used the support and resources available from subject associations to ensure that curriculum initiatives are well informed by current developments in the subject.
- The detailed geography policy is reviewed every two years. Self-evaluation is accurate and action planning is focused on continually enhancing provision and raising attainment. The school demonstrates a good capacity to continue to improve its work in the subject.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to enhance the curriculum to ensure that there is more of a precise focus on the progressive development of pupils' geographical skills
- using the support and resources available from subject associations to ensure that curriculum initiatives are well informed by current developments in the subject
- enhancing the existing portfolio of samples of pupils' geographical work to include:
 - detailed annotations of National Curriculum levels
 - good exemplars of marking and feedback which show pupils how to improve their work.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Angela Milner
Her Majesty's Inspector