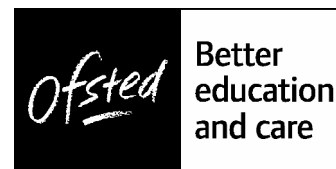


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



4 March 2007

Mr Baddeley
Headteacher
Swadelands School
Ham Lane
Maidstone
Lenham
Kent
ME17 2QJ

Dear Mr Baddeley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Citizenship and ICT

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my joint visit with Peter Green on 22 -23 February to look at work in citizenship and ICT.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of citizenship, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity. Also, as well as looking at key areas of ICT, the visit had a particular focus on the assessment of ICT.

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 lessons.

Citizenship

The overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory with many good features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in citizenship are satisfactory.

- The written work of pupils in citizenship lessons is good and they respond well to the topics covered in citizenship lessons. Topics are covered adequately; although extension activities are planned there is little evidence of such activities being completed in detail.
- Standards are satisfactory, although the proportion of students gaining A* to C grades on the short GCSE course was low in 2005 and 2006.
- In citizenship lessons pupils participate confidently in discussion and the activities to engage them are suitable.
- The focus this year on improving assessment for learning and identifying key words and images in citizenship are appropriate measures to improve achievement. Activities to improve communication skills and responsible action are being developed well and written into schemes of work.
- Pupils' progress is now being tracked and specific citizenship targets are set in both Key Stages, although their progress between the Key Stages is not clear.
- The school council is very active and has widespread support. This has been instrumental in bringing about some positive changes such as water fountains, an anti-bullying DVD and taking an active role in the recent appointment of the new headteacher. It also reviews school policies and its suggestions have informed changes to the student planner and environmental policy.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and use relevant and topical resources; effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) is being developed. Several pupils said that lessons could be improved by less note-taking and further use of discussion.
- Current issues such as drugs, smoking, racism and human and animal rights are sensitively dealt with. Topical issues are sometimes followed up outside the classroom with trips, such as politics and history visits. Good use is made of visitors to reinforce messages about the environment and the media.
- The resources are well used and a good stock is being built up. The plans to improve resources further are appropriate.
- Assessment is encouraging and helpful, though it does not provide sufficient and frequent detail to show pupils how to improve.
- Lesson plans do not make good use of pupil data to inform the lesson activities.

- The department has dedicated classrooms which have appropriate and engaging displays that reinforce respect, diversity and anti-bullying.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Every year group, except year 10, has one dedicated citizenship lesson. Citizenship is also addressed through other humanities subjects in years 7 to 9 but there is not sufficient time given to this in year 10. The citizenship improvement plan identifies the need for more time.
- Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) also supports well the elements of knowledge and understanding in citizenship. The citizenship schemes of work are thorough and well planned and show topics, lesson activities, resources and links to other work.
- The subject has status in the school and the citizenship department formally has the responsibility of provision for community activities and the Student Council as well as PSHE. Parents also receive clear individual citizenship reports.
- There is good community involvement. The work of the student council with Lenham Residents Association and students joining the parish council are examples of how the citizenship curriculum links into the community. Evidence of active and responsible action is through pupils from the school taking part in the Kent Youth Parliament and Ashford Youth Forum and consulting on the local travel plan. Pupils were responsible for and setting up a website and organising fund raising to build a school in Malawi.
- There is clear understanding of how the strands of citizenship fit together but political literacy is an area for further development.

Leadership and management of citizenship

Leadership and management are good.

- The subject is well lead and managed. It has good staffing ratio and the aims of the department are clear and accord with the National Curriculum. The head of citizenship has a good overview of citizenship and has worked effectively to raise the profile of the subject in the school.
- The citizenship team has assessed its contribution accurately for strengths and weaknesses and has a well considered improvement plan. This includes measures to bring about improvement in the GCSE. Specifically, these include moderating the coursework more rigorously, identifying earlier where remedial action needs to be taken and ensuring there is back up in case of teacher absence.
- There has been a thorough curriculum audit of citizenship which has shown that schemes of work from other departments do not have explicit enough details on how they are covering citizenship, though

English and religious education provide good coverage of topics such as media, immigration, rights and respect.

- Training for staff in citizenship has commenced and the plans to continue and develop this are sound.

Subject issue: provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

Diversity is included specifically in citizenship schemes of work but not in other subjects. Work in Year 7 picks up on traveller issues. Racism, prejudice and diversity are addressed in English, history and religious education. They are also covered in the year 11 GCSE programme and through events in a themed diversity week. Customs, marriage, animal rights and human rights/responsibilities are covered well in Key Stage 3 schemes of work and media and bias are well covered in Key Stage 4 schemes of work.

Even so, a number of pupils are still not clear on what diversity means in a modern society.

Inclusion

The head of citizenship works effectively with Kent Ethnic Minority Community Achievement Service to support traveller children. She is the designated teacher and has received training and is now ready to train other teachers in the school.

The school council is effective in tackling bullying and has produced a DVD; it is visible in offering mentoring and peer support to other pupils.

Issues about rights and responsibilities are dealt with well and feature prominently in citizenship lessons.

An appropriate ASDAN course is taught to small group of pupils in years 10 and 11 covering citizenship as one of its modules.

Boys perform less well than girls but there no clear strategies in place to address this underachievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing further explicit citizenship themes within other curriculum subjects
- ensuring that pupils and staff understand more fully the distinctiveness and importance of citizenship
- developing further teaching and learning strategies for citizenship, including ICT and resources.

ICT

The overall effectiveness of ICT was judged to be inadequate. This review was undertaken shortly after the new headteacher took up post and before the appointment of a new leading ICT teacher. A network manager is now in post and there are plans to appoint a permanent subject leader shortly.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ICT are inadequate.

- In the 2006 GCSE ICT examination, girls achieved well. The boys underachieved because they did not always complete coursework. The proportion of pupils gaining an A*-C grade improved but more than 20 per cent of those entered failed to achieve a pass grade.
- Large numbers of pupils at Key Stage 4 are not able to develop a full range of ICT skills because they are not taught them.
- Pupils know how to construct a spreadsheet although relatively weak numeracy skills restrict their use of some of the more advanced features of the software.
- At Key Stage 3, achievement is satisfactory in some aspects of ICT but pupils make little progress with systems, control and data logging. This is because these aspects are not dealt with in sufficient depth.
- The development of pupils' ICT capability is inconsistent across the curriculum and is dependent upon the expertise of their individual subject teachers.
- Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their ICT activities. However, some pupils are disaffected and do not show an interest in their ICT lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of ICT

The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory.

- There are examples of good teaching of ICT, as seen in physical education and media studies. For example, pupils improve their ICT skills and their performance in physical education by making effective use and review of video recordings of their activities.
- The specialist ICT teaching observed was satisfactory. The new senior ICT teacher has a good knowledge of the curriculum and is currently modifying the schemes of work to better suit pupils' needs. Support for the more inexperienced teachers within the ICT department is good and improving.
- Occasionally, teachers are unable to manage the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. This results in low level disruption to learning and prevents pupils' from making better progress.

- Across the school, the use of ICT is inconsistent. There are pockets of good practice. However, too often it is dependent on the teacher's enthusiasm for ICT rather than a planned approach.
- Satisfactory use is made of the support provided by the ICT technical staff.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is inadequate.

- At Key Stage 3, the curriculum does not cover all aspects of ICT and statutory requirements are not fully met.
- At Key Stage 4, a significant proportion of pupils do not follow a programme of study that meets statutory requirements.
- Pupils' ICT experiences vary considerably across the curriculum and even within a subject. There is not a consistent approach to improving pupils' ICT capability.
- Pupils enjoy using the ICT facilities. Pupils have good access to the school's e-learning platform and many use this to carry out research and to access school based materials.

Leadership and management of ICT

Leadership and management are inadequate.

- You have shown a strong commitment to improve pupils' achievement in ICT.
- There is no clear, coherent vision for ICT development across the school although there are plans to formulate a whole-school vision.
- The assistant headteacher has identified the deficiencies with the school's ICT provision and plans are in place to improve the current situation.
- The monitoring of pupils' ICT experiences is not rigorous enough and results in many of them underachieving.

Assessment of ICT

Assessment is inadequate.

- The system for assessing pupils' ICT performance has over estimated how well they are achieving. New procedures provide a more realistic view but these are not yet standardised across the department.
- Pupils know what level they are working at but do not understand what this level means. They do not always know how to improve their work.
- The monitoring of pupils' ICT experiences and performance across the school is limited.
- The school did not take part in the pilot onscreen Key Stage 3 ICT test.

Inclusion

Inclusion is satisfactory.

All pupils benefit from opportunities to use the school's computers outside of lesson times. This ensures that none are disadvantaged when completing homework or research.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included to:

- improve pupils' achievement and standards in ICT
- review and improve the curriculum to ensure pupils receive their statutory entitlement
- review the accuracy and rigour of assessment systems
- provide a clear direction for the development of ICT across the school
- review and improve the leadership and management of ICT.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship and ICT 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 Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

David Cox
Additional Inspector