



Newsletter

17th June, 2008.

Governor Curriculum Monitoring Visits

Each term, three governors linked to specific curriculum co-ordinators come and discuss progress with our staff. Derek Woodrow, our Vice Chair, has carefully developed the systems which are in place. Here is an example of a report presented to Governors. (other reports available on request). I think that you will agree that Governors and staff are working together to a very high standard to ensure your confidence in our curriculum, assessment etc.,

Governor Curriculum Monitoring Visit ~ Spring Term 2008

Geography

Using a template of general questions previously agreed by the Governing Body, Mrs F Eyden discussed the delivery of Geography within the Woodheys curriculum with Miss Barbara Lane, Key Stage 2 Geography Co-ordinator and with Miss A Shaw, Key Stage 1 Co-ordinator.

To what extent does the curriculum match Government strategies/guidelines?

Geography is delivered in weekly two-hour slots over a half term during the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms, but many cross-curricular links are also made to it during other lessons. The school generally follows QCA guidelines as far as Geography is concerned. However, amendments have been made to some schemes of work to make them more directly relevant to the *Afritwin* project with South Africa and to enhance Woodheys' bid to achieve International School status. One of the main changes has been to replace the study of a village in India with a township in South Africa, which means that the school can benefit from first hand accounts from its partner schools in Durban.

Have any developments taken place in the subject since the last review in terms of changes to schemes of work whether internally or externally initiated?

This was the first curriculum monitoring visit for this subject, so it was not possible to make comparisons with any previous reviews.

The school's *Afritwin* links have helped to embed Geography more firmly in the curriculum and have increased the direct relevance of the subject to pupils' studies. Both Key Stage Co-ordinators have reviewed the content of the Geography curriculum and have sought to include more relevant and topical content. For example this year, in addition to the standard QCA Geography curriculum topics, Key Stage 2 pupils will be comparing and contrasting Durban with Sale/Manchester. Key Stage 1 pupils will be using 'Barney Bear' to highlight different locations around the world. Pupils have been encouraged to take the small cuddly toy bear with them if they have gone on holiday and an excellent resource of photos and artefacts is gradually being built up.

An interesting new development this year has seen new links being forged between Geography and PE through the introduction of a new orienteering trail within the school grounds. An accompanying map will help pupils to improve their map-reading skills considerably.

How have achievements changed, especially in terms of any differences which might be due to gender or ethnicity or related to ESL?

In 2008 one of the school's main targets is to achieve International School status, and Geography studies have a very important role to play in this. A number of events and activities are being staged throughout the year to celebrate diversity and multi ethnic groups within the school. For example, the recent International Food Evening highlighted the existence and contribution made by school families from some 20 different countries in the world. Information about a large number of these countries was researched by pupils and distributed to members of our school community.

Pupils have been very enthusiastic about our 'Barney Bear' and his travels. Several children and staff members have taken the bear with them on holiday and have reported back with first-hand experiences from a wide variety of locations. In addition to this, a 'Spanish Week' was held in March and pupils researched many geographical aspects of Spanish-speaking countries around the world.

These three examples demonstrate how the subject co-ordinators are making a conscious effort to ensure that Geography is a highly inclusive subject within the whole school curriculum and that ethnic differences are seen in a very positive light.

Have any pupils been identified as being gifted, talented or in need of specific support and what arrangements have been put in place?

In terms of this subject, no pupils have been identified in any of the categories listed.

Is there any single change which would make a significant difference to achievement in this area?

The Geography Co-ordinators felt that, in the context of an ever-changing world, the current textbooks and some other geographical resources could do with up-dating. It would also be of great benefit to pupils to be able to undertake proper field trips, perhaps once per year. Staff also felt that more in-service training would keep their own knowledge up to date and would help them to gain more insight into the subject.

General Conclusion

My general conclusion was that although Geography might be considered as one of the more minor subjects within the curriculum (as in most schools), every effort is being made at Woodheys to present it to pupils in a lively and engaging way. Through the links to the International Schools Award, the new orienteering trail and also to the work being done on global and sustainable issues within school, the subject co-ordinators ensure that pupils understand the relevance of the subject to their everyday lives. The school is certainly doing enough to fulfil its obligations with regard to curriculum guidelines. However, an already satisfactory programme of lessons at both Key Stages could be enhanced with the introduction of more up to date resources and the opportunity for further staff training.

I would like to thank Barbara Lane and Alison Shaw very much for their input to this report.

Governor: Freda Eyden

Presented to Governors: Monday, 17th March 2008