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| **QM Historical Association Quality Mark Final Report** | | | |
| Visit to: Knowsley Junior School, Oldham | | Date: 28.11.14 | |
| Context:  Knowsley Junior School is a three form entry school with 360 students on roll. It is set in a semi-rural location on the outskirts of Oldham and the affluent area of Saddleworth. Children travel from around the authority to attend. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, and the proportion of children with special educational needs is 15%. Most pupils are of a White British heritage with a minority of pupils from minority-ethnic groups, mainly of Asian or Caribbean heritage who are EAL learners.  The main priorities of the school development plan are; to ensure all children understand basic English, equip all students with problem solving skills in mathematics, supporting pupil premium children adequately and challenging the high achievers. We are also looking towards implementing and planning the new curriculum. In terms of history, the subject leader is seeking to ensure that its educational potential and relevance are understood by both staff and pupils. Investment in resources is also required to allow for effective learning opportunities. | | | |
| 1. Learning and Teaching   The Assessors agreed that the evidence meets the Quality Mark Criteria for ‘Gold’.  The Assessors observed lessons in Y3 and Y6. Four lessons were sampled; VE day (Year 6 x 3) and Stonehenge (Year 3). Both Assessors agreed that the practice observed easily fell into the ‘Gold’ criteria for the Quality Mark. The Year 6 children confidently considered differing perspectives, for example how the end of war did not bring joy to everyone as many people had lost loved ones and the Year 3 children were careful to use tentative language such as “possibly…might…probably… we’re not absolutely sure” when discussing what we know about Stonehenge. The teachers demonstrated excellent questioning skills and the related literacy activities were carefully scaffolded to support and challenge the children appropriately. Within the Year 6 lessons observed the pupils successfully communicated their knowledge and understanding via a hot-seating activity. | | | |
| 1. Curriculum:   The Assessors agreed that in both its content and approach to curriculum development practice met and exceeded the Quality Mark Criteria for ‘Gold’.  The history units of work are closely aligned with expectations for literacy and from the evidence with in the portfolio the assessors were concerned that this might ‘overshadow’ the history being taught. This was an unfounded concern. The four lessons observed clearly demonstrated that the children are developing their historical skills very well. However the marking of the children’s work could be focused more on the historical skills sometimes.  The amount of time allocated to history is very good. The curriculum map of the units of work has been carefully thought out. The coordinator has developed a new curriculum plan taking into account previous units of work but also where newer units could sensibly be incorporated. The local history component is taught as part of a Victorians week which the whole school take part in. This is carefully planned to ensure progression of expectations and using local links within the community. Further opportunities are used to enhance the curriculum offered, for example their Children in Need day (2013) was linked to the 1950s and Remembrance Day is commemorated each year – but especially so in this centenary year.  One area which could be reviewed is the post 1066 unit on the Second World War to ensure this is examined as a turning point rather than as a general Home Front topic as in the pre-2014 National Curriculum. | | | |
| 1. Achievement   The Assessors agreed that the achievement of students met the Quality Mark Criteria for ‘Gold’.  The evidence we observed, in conjunction with the submission demonstrates that the children develop very good historical skills and knowledge. The children demonstrate good chronological skills within the context of the unit, they can research and interpret well and they organise and communicate their work confidently through a range of literature types, for example -letters, diaries, non-chronological reports, chronological newspaper reports and persuasive texts. Extensive systems for monitoring and tracking are in place and are utilised by the coordinator and staff to ensure progress is made.  One area which could be built on is to develop the children’s ‘big picture ‘of chronology further. The coordinator should continue to endeavour to make stronger links with the Infant feeder school to ensure progression between the key stages. | | | |
| 1. Leadership   The Assessors agreed that leadership was a particular strength of the school and exceeded the Quality Mark Criteria for ‘Gold’.  The History Coordinator has a very clear vision on where she is taking the Teaching and Learning in History. She has an excellent understanding of the school’s strengths and where they need to focus next to continue this improvement. Detailed audits of the staff subject knowledge and pupil voice have been carried out and these have been responded to appropriately. An audit of parents’ knowledge, links and how these could be used has also been undertaken. The coordinator is actively involved in a local cluster group for the humanities and there is evidence this has led to a series of successful training events within the school to implement the new curriculum.  The coordinator is developing links with the secondary school which the majority of the pupils move on to and also networking with other local primary schools to consider other approaches and how differing children are catered for.  Through discussion with the head Teacher and subject coordinator it is clear that the senior management team of the school regard history as a key focus for the school and recognise its value in supporting the teaching of the core curriculum and also in motivating students and enriching the wider curriculum. The SMT also values the way in which the subject enables the school to strengthen links within the local community. From the portfolio it was clear that the coordinator was knowledgably and passionate about the subject, however it was clear from discussions with staff and lessons observed that these are attributes shard across the team. | | | |
| 1. Enrichment   The Assessors agreed that the enrichment of the school met the Quality Mark Criteria for ‘Gold’.  The classroom facilities are light and spacious. The rooms are full of student’s work and many of the displays are used as part of day to day learning. Key vocabulary related to the history topics is prominently displayed. Students are used to being out of their seats and using the space actively. History based displays are constantly changing and are evident throughout the school.  Links are being developed with the local museum. As part of their World War II unit of work older members of the community or relations and friends of the staff are encouraged to come in and talk to the children demonstrating excellent use of oral history as a primary source. The school website has an area specifically focused on history within the school and is both informative and entertaining to a wide audience.  The activities students are engaged in include; role plays, poetry and other cross curricular work with the Literacy. Students also communicate their understanding of history via the creative arts as evident in display work related to the blitz. | | | |
| 1. Other | | | |
| Final Comments:  The Assessors would like to thank all members of the school community for a thoroughly enjoyable day. | | | |
| Award made? Yes  Level: Gold | Date of Award:  28th November 2014 | | Renewal Date:  28th November 2017 |