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Miss K Wiles
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Wiles

Ofsted 2010-11 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 19 November 2010 to look at work in science.

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.

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

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards in science are above average in most years. Standards are average only in the years when a high proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Children generally enter school with lower levels of knowledge and understanding than most children of their age. Pupils make good progress in science, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils enjoy science. In particular, they enjoy investigations. A good example of their enjoyment was observed when children in class 1 showed great delight and application as they tested out the strength of buildings made of different materials in a lesson linked to the story of *The Three Little Pigs*.

- Investigations in science make a significant contribution to the personal development of most pupils, as they learn to cooperate effectively and to support each other to complete tasks successfully.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teaching of an outstanding quality was observed. This was achieved when excellent generic teaching skills were combined with high levels of understanding of science, including the precise use of the language of, in this case, electrical circuits. All pupils made at least good progress in this lesson. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, worked on challenging tasks. They were expected to work with a high degree of independence.
- All lessons observed had strong features. They were practical in nature, well planned and resourced, with clear differentiation of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Information and communication technology, in the form of interactive whiteboards, was used effectively.
- Where learning was less effective, this was because teaching was slightly more formal than was appropriate for the pupils, who were at a stage of development where they needed to experience activities first hand before they could think in the abstract.
- Pupils' work was generally well presented with marking that was relevant to each pupil. However, marking does not, at present, inform pupils of the next steps they need to take, or, especially for older pupils, help them to understand what is required for them to move to higher levels of attainment.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The curriculum meets the requirements of learning and development for the early years and for the National Curriculum from Years 1 to 6.
- Science is taught successfully through a programme of themes. Teachers skilfully plan lessons that are of interest and relevance to pupils, for example, by linking a programme of work on forces to pupils' experience of fairground rides during a visit to a theme park.
- The school makes excellent use of the local environment to enrich science, make the subject relevant to pupils and promote environmental awareness. The location of the school, close to the Wash, is fully exploited in sea and land studies, and in exploring traditional and future forms of energy production, through visits to windmills and wind farms.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in science is good.

- You bring specialist knowledge of science to the subject's leadership. By promoting science you have ensured its current core status within the curriculum.
- Partnership working is excellent. The school is federated with a local primary school, also under your leadership, and you share resources, plan together and deploy staffing to best effect. Relations with other schools, in networks, and with external partners, benefit the school's work in science. You have a strong partnership with parents, and use parental skills within the community to involve parents in their children's education.
- Assessment and monitoring of progress and attainment for management and accountability are thorough, and assessment for the purposes of supporting learning is a current focus of the school's improvement planning.

Area for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing teachers' marking further to help pupils identify the next stages in their learning and, for older pupils in particular, to enable them to understand what is required to move to higher levels of attainment.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop science 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

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector