

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 Hill
Headteacher
East Hoathly CofE Primary School
Church Marks Lane
East Hoathly
Lewes
BN8 6EQ

Dear Mrs Hill

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 May 2011 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 without their consent.

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

The overall effectiveness of science is satisfactory.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is satisfactory.

- By the end of Year 6, most pupils reach the expected Level 4 and make satisfactory progress. Fewer pupils than average reach the higher Level 5 and the achievement of girls is better than that of boys. Achievement is improving as there is a greater focus on teaching science through practical activities.
- In Year 2, pupils typically reach the level expected of their age. The progress they make is also improving with the emphasis on hands-on learning opportunities.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the good support they receive.

- Pupils' understanding of scientific concepts is developing well. Their investigative skills are also improving and they are confident in following instructions. They are good at working together and organising themselves in group work.
- Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are keen to take part in exciting activities. They are ready to voice their opinions and give their answers, encouraged by teachers' careful use of probing questions.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory.

- Teaching is improving as lesson planning moves towards a more creative approach that emphasises practical and investigative activities that are more interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and create a positive climate for learning environment in the classroom.
- Teachers always share with pupils what they will be learning in the lessons. These learning intentions are sometimes too general and not focused enough on specific science concepts. Consequently, pupils often find it difficult to show what they have understood and learnt in the lesson. In addition, these lessons do not always address underlying misconceptions in pupils' understanding of scientific concepts.
- Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well in their lessons and pupils make appropriate use of computers to help with their learning.
- Pupils' work books are marked regularly. Marking in some pupils' books is not sufficiently diagnostic and does not give enough detail on the standard of the work and how it could be improved.
- Learning is well supported by the teaching assistants who are valued members of the teaching team.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is adapted from the former Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work linked with the overarching topics that have been chosen as the basis for the school curriculum as a whole.
- The school curriculum is mapped out carefully every year to allow for the work in the mixed-age classes to be planned and eliminate repetition. Within that map, the individual science topics are often linked with other subjects, such as art or design and technology.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children many good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through exploration and play.

- The school organises a variety of different external trips and visits, with science often forming an important element of these outings.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science are satisfactory.

- The subject is effectively led with a good emphasis on maintaining an investigative approach to science. You and the subject coordinator have a clear vision for developing the quality of science education across the school.
- The subject coordinator is working hard to raise the profile of science although this has to be in the context of leading five other subject areas as well.
- You are putting into place effective monitoring and reviewing of provision and are developing the coordinator's role in this.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- sharpening the focus of learning intentions for science sessions so that pupils can show what they have understood and learnt
- developing the quality of assessment of pupils' work so that they know the standards they are reaching and how to improve.

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

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector