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Mr T Halling
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Halling

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 22 September 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is outstanding.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is outstanding.

- Pupils start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is just below the expected levels for their age. They make excellent progress and reach high standards by the end of Year 6. Almost all pupils reach the expected Level 4 with more than three quarters of them reaching the higher Level 5.
- Different groups of pupils in the school are all achieving equally well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress as they receive very good support that meets their needs.
- As a result of a strong emphasis on investigative science, pupils develop good experimental skills and are keen participants in lessons, approaching their work with obvious enthusiasm. Behaviour is exemplary.

- Science is valued for the important contribution it makes to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to find out things for themselves and get involved in practical activities.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is outstanding.

- Teachers' relationships with pupils are excellent with high levels of trust and mutual respect producing a very positive learning environment. Teachers are skilled in using questioning to encourage pupils to explore their own ideas and develop their understanding of scientific concepts.
- Lessons are planned to cover a very good range of learning experiences that encourages pupils to be actively involved in their science learning.
- Assessment is used well throughout the school to support learning. The secure monitoring systems used in literacy and numeracy are being extended to science. The school is currently putting a lot of effort into monitoring pupils' scientific and experimental skills.
- Good written and verbal feedback given by teachers to the pupils ensures they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' skills in assessing their own work are less well developed.
- Learning is well supported by skilled and experienced teaching assistants who are valued members of the teaching team.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has an excellent focus on independent activities that allow pupils to explore, investigate and find out.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The science curriculum is visible around the school through some excellent displays of pupils' work. In classrooms these are used interactively by the pupils and form a valuable teaching aid.
- The locally prepared external scheme used by the school has been adjusted and changed to meet pupils' needs. The scheme provides good coverage of all aspects of the science curriculum and supports the assessment of standards in science.
- The school has worked hard to introduce a more creative approach to their teaching that concentrates on how pupils learn. This has been successful in science although links across other subjects are not so well developed.
- The science enrichment days are much appreciated by the pupils who say these are their 'favourite science activities'.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science is outstanding.

- Science is very well led with an excellent emphasis on maintaining an investigative approach. The subject leader has a clear vision for developing the quality of science education across the school.
- Regular review ensures that the monitoring and evaluation of science provision and outcomes are effective and give a clear view of the strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils' progress is monitored carefully to give a good overview of individual achievement that can be monitored from one year to the next as pupils move through the school.
- Continuing professional development for teachers is well-targeted at improving science teaching, especially scientific enquiry that enhances pupils' science skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' skills in assessing the quality of their own science work and that of their peers
- extending cross-curricular links between science and other subjects.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop science in the school.

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector