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Mr R Green
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Dear Mr Green

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 24 November 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 and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. In 2011, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was similar to the national average, although the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was slightly above average.
- Given pupils' attainment on entry into Year 3 they make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of science. They make particularly good progress in developing their skills of scientific enquiry.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make similar progress in science.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are very good. They show a real interest in science, are keen to ask and answer questions and readily participate in the activities arranged for them. Pupils work

exceptionally well in pairs and groups and complete practical work safely, sensibly and accurately.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teaching was good in all the lessons observed. Good teaching is underpinned by strong, generic teaching skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well prepared around clear learning outcomes that are shared effectively with pupils. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning through a range of activities and tasks.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils, and are skilled at keeping them working at a good pace.
- Teachers check and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well during lessons. However, at times, questioning is not sufficiently targeted at specific individuals to ensure that the learning of all is effectively checked.
- Lesson activities are generally well matched to the ability and learning needs of pupils. Those pupils with special educational and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants. In a few lessons, there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- The marking of pupils' work is good. Most marking gives pupils clear and helpful advice about how to improve. However, this very good practice is not consistent across all classes.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- The whole-school curriculum is based around imaginative topics. Science content and skills are integrated effectively into these topics so that they are delivered through contexts that are interesting and relevant to pupils.
- Medium- and short-term planning makes strong links between learning in science and other subjects such as design technology, information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers creatively adapt medium-term plans so that the lessons they deliver capture the imagination and interest of the pupils in their class.
- The science curriculum is very well enhanced by activities such as a science week, and a range of science related trips and visits. These provide pupils with interesting and memorable experiences that promote both their enjoyment and learning of science.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science is good.

- A culture of high expectations of achievement and personal development pervades the school and is clearly evident in the leadership and management of science.
- Science leaders have established a clear vision that is based on developing children's' sense of curiosity and enquiry of the world around them.
- A range of strategies is used to assess pupils' attainment. Challenging targets are set for pupils and their progress towards these targets is monitored well. However, the school recognises that there is some variation in the accuracy of assessment and monitoring information could be used more sharply to improve pupils' progress.
- Systems of monitoring and evaluation ensure that the science leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and the areas in need of further development.
- Opportunities to share best practice in teaching and assessment have not been fully exploited.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing more opportunities for best practice in science teaching and assessment to be shared
- ensuring that assessment and monitoring information is used more sharply to target interventions, to improve pupils' achievement from good to outstanding.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector