

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



5 March 2012

Mrs S Kenneth
Headteacher
The Highway Primary School
The Highway
Orpington
Kent
BR6 9DJ

Dear Mrs Kenneth

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 27 February 2012 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; observation of four lessons and a visit to the school 'eco garden'.

The overall effectiveness of science is good

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Pupils start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is in line with the expected levels for their age. They make good progress and reach above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress due to the good support they receive.
- Pupils' understanding of scientific concepts is developing well. Their investigative skills are improving due to the emphasis in lesson planning on practical activities.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good. 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 good.

- Teaching is improving as lesson planning moves towards a more creative approach that emphasises practical and investigative activities. These are more engaging and relevant to the pupils' needs and interests.
- An external assessment scheme is providing teachers with a good view of pupils' performance in science and is used to track skills as well as outcomes of tests.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly although some of the comments and feedback need to be more diagnostic and give pupils better feedback on how to improve the standard of their work.
- Learning is well supported by skilled and experienced teaching assistants who are valued members of the teaching team.
- There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and this creates positive learning environments in the classrooms. Teachers make good use of skilled questioning to draw all pupils into contributing to the lessons.
- Teachers are developing pupils' literacy skills in science contexts, for example where they place considerable emphasis on developing scientific vocabulary. Pupils are increasingly skilled in using familiar words in different scientific contexts.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- Science is valued throughout the school curriculum for the contribution it makes to pupils knowledge and understanding of the world from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6.
- The science curriculum is visible around the school through some very good displays of pupils' work. These show a wide range of activities and good investigative work.
- Practical work is an important part of the curriculum and pupils say they really enjoy this aspect of their work as it helps them to improve their understanding.
- The external scheme used by the school has been adjusted and changed to meet the needs of the pupils. The scheme provides good coverage of all aspects of the curriculum.
- The school grounds are used as an excellent resource to support the curriculum. The award winning and thriving 'eco garden' gives a wide range of opportunities for science to move out of the classroom and is a well supported extra-curricular activity.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science is good.

- The new coordinator has made a good start in both carrying on and developing the work of the previous coordinator. She is an enthusiastic subject leader who is keen to maintain science as a high-profile subject in the school.
- Regular review and a range of monitoring strategies ensure that the evaluation of provision gives a good view of the strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils' views form an important part of this work and the outcomes of pupil interviews and questionnaires focused on science were used to adapt and change the curriculum.
- Pupils' progress is regularly tracked and monitored to give a good overview that can be tracked from one year to the next as pupils move through the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making sure the marking of pupils' work, especially in Key Stage 2, is more diagnostic and gives pupils guidance on how to improve their work and that this is followed up in subsequent lessons.

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