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12 June 2012

Mr N Evans  
Headteacher  
Parrett and Axe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School  
FairOak Way  
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Dear Mr Evans

### **Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: science**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 10 May 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; and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

#### **Achievement in science**

Achievement in science is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of knowledge, skills and understanding that is typical for their age. However, this varies from year-to-year due to the small size of year groups. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment is above average. For the past three years all pupils have attained the expected level 4 and an above average percentage have attained the higher level 5.
- During their time at the school pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas and in developing their skills of scientific enquiry.
- Those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make similar good progress to others in the school, due to the good in-class support they receive from teaching assistants.

- Pupils enjoy science, particularly when they are given the opportunity to design and carry out their own experiments. They behave well in lessons and willingly and safely engage in the activities arranged for them by teachers.

### **Quality of teaching in science**

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to confidently provide pupils with clear and helpful explanations that aid their learning.
- Lessons contain a range of engaging activities that actively involves pupils in learning.
- Teachers make effective use of talk partners and questioning to explore and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and concepts.
- Pupils value the good relationships they have with their teachers and find them, helpful and supportive.
- Lesson activities are generally well matched to the ability and learning needs of pupils. However, on some occasions there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils know their targets and how well they are doing. Some marking gives pupils clear advice about how to improve or asks challenging questions that extends their thinking; however, this good practice is not consistent across all classes.

### **Quality of the curriculum in science**

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- The schemes of work, which are based around a commercial scheme, are flexibly adapted by teachers to ensure that they meet the needs and interest of the pupils in their class.
- Learning is very effectively enhanced through opportunities provided by 'Finding out Fridays' to study science through contexts and themes that are relevant and interesting to pupils.
- The development of pupils' skills of scientific enquiry is central to the science curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations are very well integrated into schemes of work.
- There are clear links with learning in other subjects, particularly English and mathematics. Pupils have good opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing and write for different purposes and audiences.
- Very good links with the local secondary school enhance the science curriculum and ensure that transition arrangements are strong.
- A very good range of visits, clubs and in-school activities enhances the science curriculum and provides pupils with enjoyable, memorable experiences.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management in science**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science is good.

- The science coordinator is experienced and knowledgeable about recent developments in science.
- There is a culture of high expectation in the school. All staff want all pupils to achieve highly.
- Pupils' attainment is mainly assessed through tests. The science coordinator has sensibly identified the need to make greater use of teacher assessments when assessing pupils.
- A good system to monitor pupils' progress is in place. Underachieving pupils are identified effectively and provided with support.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluation are effective and the science coordinator has a clear and accurate understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.
- Science courses throughout the school are coherently organised and resources are well managed.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that tasks and activities are well matched to the ability of all pupils in all lessons, particularly higher attaining pupils
- developing the assessment system so that a greater emphasis is placed on teacher assessment.

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

**Peter Sanderson**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**