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Mrs K Riordan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Riordan

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 9 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.

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 varies from year-to-year due to the small size of year groups. Over the past few years attainment has been broadly average although in 2011 it was above average.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and between Years 1 and 6. This was reflected in the good progress seen in the majority of lessons observed.
- All groups of pupils make similar progress; however, progress is stronger in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Too few pupils attain the higher level 3 at the end of Year 2.
- Children enjoy science and behave very well in lessons. They willingly complete the tasks set for them and enthusiastically explore scientific questions by planning and carrying out investigations.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that contain a range of activities that actively engage pupils in learning. The opportunities provided for pupils to explore scientific ideas make a good contribution to the development of their skills of scientific enquiry.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and lessons proceed at a good pace.
- Pupils' investigation planning skills are developed well through the consistent use of a common planning sheet in Key Stage 2.
- In the majority of lessons teachers plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. However, this is not consistently the case and on occasions activities are not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work using success criteria, and teachers' use of next step marking to inform pupils of what to do to improve are not fully developed.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- Coverage of the National Curriculum in each mixed-age class is good.
- The science curriculum is well planned and delivered through thematic topics that make good links with learning in other subjects.
- The curriculum has a good balance between developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas and concepts and developing their skills of scientific enquiry.
- Educational trips, the eco-group, gardening club and opportunities provided by caring for the school's goats and other animals enliven the science curriculum and enhance pupils' enjoyment of the subject.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science is good.

- The science leader is well informed of current developments in science education. He has established a clear vision for science education at the school which is based around developing pupils' sense of curiosity and enquiry.
- The science leader has a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in science provision and outcomes. A clear plan is in place to drive improvement.
- An effective system is in place to monitor the progress made by pupils. However, the science leader has rightly identified the need to ensure

greater consistency in the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment.

- Teaching programmes and resources are well organised and managed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 by providing greater challenge in lessons for more able pupils
- providing more opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work using success criteria and ensuring that all teachers use next step marking effectively to inform pupils of what to do to improve
- further improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment.

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