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Mr R White
Headteacher
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Dear Mr White

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 25 September 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is outstanding.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is outstanding.

- Pupils start school in the foundation stage with attainment that is in line with the expected levels for their age. They make excellent progress, especially in Key Stage 2 and reach high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make very good progress due to the good support they receive.
- Pupils' understanding of scientific concepts is developing very well. Their investigative skills are improving due to the emphasis in lesson planning on practical activities that are designed to challenge and make pupils apply their scientific understanding.
- Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are keen to take part in the exciting activities planned by

their teachers. They are ready to voice their opinions and give their answers, encouraged by teachers' skilful use of probing questions.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is outstanding.

- Much of the teaching in science is outstanding and always consistently good. This is because lesson planning is based on a creative approach that emphasises practical and investigative activities that are engaging and relevant to the pupils' needs and interests. This planning is supported by the thoughtful and innovative use of resources that give excellent support to pupils' learning.
- There are excellent relationships in classrooms and teachers have high expectations and will only accept pupils' best efforts. There is a strong focus on 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.
- Pupils' progress in science is tracked closely through regular assessments that take place every term. This gives the school a clear picture of achievement in science in every year group and allows any potential variations in outcomes to be identified and immediately addressed.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly although some of the comments and feedback need to be more diagnostic so as to give pupils better feedback on how to improve their work. Pupils need more opportunities to follow up on this feedback.
- Learning is well supported by skilled and experienced teaching assistants who are valued members of the teaching team.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- Science is valued throughout the curriculum for the contribution it makes to enhancing and supporting pupils' creative thinking as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Practical work is an important part of the curriculum and pupils really enjoy this aspect of their work. It helps them to improve their understanding of science. Resources are planned and used imaginatively to support learning.
- Planning for the science curriculum embraces the whole school approach to literacy and numeracy, contributing strongly to these areas.
- The imaginative and stimulating curriculum is tightly planned to make sure all pupils are successful in their learning journey and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported.
- The curriculum is enriched through excellent and wide ranging activities that include links with local Universities. The school grounds are used as

an excellent resource to support the curriculum through Eco gardening activities and the 'Forest School' initiative.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

The effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science is outstanding.

- Science is very well led with an excellent emphasis on maintaining an investigative approach to science. The subject leader has a clear vision for developing the quality of science education and enthusiastic leadership ensures that science is a high profile subject in the school.
- Regular review ensures that the monitoring and evaluation of science provision and outcomes is effective and gives an accurate picture of strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully. Individual achievement is 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 developing teachers' subject knowledge through links with university and science learning centre training courses.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Making sure the marking of pupils' work is more diagnostic, gives pupils guidance on how to improve their work and ensure 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