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Mrs M Goddard
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Goddard

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 19 October 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, governors and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is outstanding.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is outstanding.

- From below average attainment at Key Stage 1, almost all pupils make outstanding progress in science to reach at least the expected Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Over a third of pupils gain Level 5. Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium attain the same above average academic standards in science as their peers. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve exceptionally well, thanks to excellent direct teaching from their class teachers as well as effective support from classroom assistants.
- The academic demand made on pupils by teachers is high, and motivates pupils to try hard. Excellent links with the nearby secondary school allow teachers to fully exploit their own science expertise and helps pupils attempt complex practical work. Pupils relish this demand, behaving responsibly when asked to conduct technically difficult experiments.

- Pupils read and write about contemporary news topics every morning, from reading-age adjusted news sheets. They summarise the main points in 'morning work books'. A substantial proportion of this work is science related, and not only boosts pupils' literacy skills, but gives them a very sophisticated understanding of the role of science in society.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is outstanding.

- Teaching over time is outstanding, as shown by the high quality and volume of science work in pupils' books, clear lesson planning and schemes of work which are excellently adapted to meet individual pupils' learning needs. Most of the teaching seen during this visit was outstanding.
- Science lessons are well-planned, with good practical resources that allow every pupil to participate in the experiments. No time is wasted at the start of lessons, and pupils are expected to think for themselves, plan for themselves, and discover the science ideas which underpin each activity.
- Occasionally teachers are too anxious to remind pupils of the need for a 'fair test' approach to practical investigations, when it would be better for pupils to realise that need for themselves as they analyse their emerging experimental results.
- Marking is done regularly and consistently and includes accurate advice on how to improve. Pupils can explain, verbally, how to improve their work and are getting better at responding in writing to their teachers' advice

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- The depth and breadth of the science knowledge, understanding and practical skills demanded by the schemes of work is very high, and begins from Year 3. This reflects the high quality subject knowledge and competence of staff. The curriculum is enhanced by excellent links with the local secondary school, giving access to equipment and technical support.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding to support whole-class trips and visits, ensuring every pupil can participate. Pupils enjoy these very much and can fully appreciate the information they have gleaned from their study of current science applications.
- High quality displays of pupils' written science work are an important feature of every classroom. There are even bigger whole school displays in corridors and the school hall. In addition to celebrating pupils' achievements, the displays emphasise the importance of science alongside other curriculum areas.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils are given time each week to complete their experiments and fully report their findings. Additional time is

provided outside of science lessons to read, discuss and write about science in society.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

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

- Senior staff and the subject co-ordinator closely monitor the progress of every pupil in science, including pupils' subject knowledge and practical 'how science works' skills. The information results in additional one-to-one support for specific pupils, revisions to pupil groupings and the design of bespoke teaching materials to address the improvements needed.
- Professional development for staff is very well informed by accurate evaluations of the quality of teaching. Very good systems to support newly qualified teachers. This effective performance management ensures that all pupils experience highly practical science teaching and that teachers' expectations are consistently high.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation includes whole-staff moderation of teacher assessed levels. This close scrutiny has led to increasing staff confidence in assessing science

A clear and shared vision between all staff for teaching science through practical enquiry is backed up by sufficient resources to meet that vision. Teachers regularly share good practice ideas in weekly staff meetings and continuously look for ways to improve their practice.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- checking that pupils are discovering the importance of the methods of scientific enquiry for themselves.

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

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector