

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Ms H Slater  
Head of Teaching and Learning  
Salcombe Church of England Primary School  
Onslow Road  
Salcombe  
Devon  
TQ8 8AG

Dear Ms Slater

### **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 11 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 and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons covering all three classes in the school.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

#### **Achievement in science**

Achievement in science is good.

- Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below that expected for their age when they join the school. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have attained the expected level 4 in science for each of the last three years. The proportion attaining the higher level 5 is broadly average.
- Given their starting points the progress made by pupils over time is above that seen nationally. Pupils made good progress in all the lessons observed during this inspection.
- Teachers plan for the learning needs of pupils well, and as a consequence all groups of children make similar good progress.
- Pupils enjoy science and are keen to do well. They work with enthusiasm to explore scientific questions and carry out investigations safely and

sensibly. They record results with care and with an increasing level of precision as they move through the school.

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

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that actively involve pupils in learning. Lessons and pupils' work observed during this inspection indicate that pupils are engaged in a wide range of learning activities in science.
- Teachers use information on pupils' prior attainment and learning needs well to ensure that lesson tasks and activities provide a good level of challenge to all pupils.
- Lessons contain many good opportunities for pupils to engage in paired and group discussion. This develops their use of scientific vocabulary well.
- Teachers make effective use of good targeted questioning to both check and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas.
- Opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work against set criteria have only recently been introduced. As a result, pupils are not always very clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The new Head of Teaching and Learning is starting to develop a thematic approach to whole school curriculum planning, with science an integral part in the themes covered. This is maximising opportunities for cross-curricular links between subjects and making very effective use of local resources and contexts. However, long term curriculum planning around whole school themes has yet to be fully established.
- The curriculum has a very clear focus on developing pupils' sense of curiosity. The development of pupil's skills of scientific enquiry are at the heart of the science curriculum with many opportunities available for them to design and carry out their own investigations.
- Strong links have been established with Kingsbridge Community College, the local secondary school, and this aids pupils' transition in learning between Years 6 and 7.
- Activities linked with the school's Eco-award help pupils develop a greater awareness of sustainability and their role in this respect.
- The school makes effective use of the local environment, trips, visits and visitors to enhance pupils' enjoyment and achievement in science.

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

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

- A culture of high expectation of achievement and personal development pervades the school and is clearly evident in the leadership and management of science.
- The science leader has established a clear vision for science education in the school, which is based around developing pupils' sense of curiosity and enquiry of the world around them.
- The targets set for pupils are challenging and a good central system is in place to track the progress of pupils towards these targets. The progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils is carefully monitored and evaluated. Anyone making less than expected progress is appropriately supported to enable them to catch-up.
- The formal monitoring of science teaching has been limited. However, the school's view of teaching in science was confirmed by the lesson observations undertaken during this inspection. Opportunities to share best practice in science teaching across the First Federation, of which the school is a part, have not yet been fully exploited.

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

- increasing the level of monitoring of science teaching and providing more opportunities for best practice in science teaching to be shared across the First Federation
- continuing to develop the thematic approach to curriculum delivery so that cross-curricular links between science and other subjects are fully exploited
- further developing and embedding the opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work so that they are clearer about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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.

Yours sincerely

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