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8 February 2013

Mrs H Sutton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sutton

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 23 January 2013 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; observation of five lessons and a learning walk visiting several classes.

The overall effectiveness of science is outstanding.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is outstanding.

- School assessment data show high standards of attainment in science for all key stages. The proportion of pupils who reach at least the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6 is very high. The proportion reaching Level 5 is also well above average and typically more than two thirds of pupils have reached this level in recent years.
- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress in lessons, and over time.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in science lessons are excellent and this makes a strong contribution to their achievement. Pupils are keen to do well and talk articulately and confidently about their experiences of science at school. Practical skills are very well developed.

- Pupils' books show that a good range of science activities has been undertaken and work is well above average standard. Pupils make excellent use of appropriate scientific terminology.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is outstanding.

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They are enthusiastic about science and have excellent relationships with their pupils. Expectations are high.
- Science lessons are very thoroughly planned and are put into context extremely well. Investigative and experimental work is given a high priority. There is a clear focus on ensuring that pupils are actively engaged in tasks that will develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers questioning techniques are well developed. Activities such as 'talk partners' are used skilfully to encourage pupils to think about and discuss their ideas. Pupil independence is promoted strongly.
- Work is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Teaching assistants provide very valuable support to individuals and groups of pupils.
- Teachers' explanations are very clear. The use of appropriate scientific vocabulary is encouraged and promoted highly effectively.
- There is very good use of information and communications technology in science lessons.
- Pupils work is marked carefully and teachers give useful targets for improvement.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- The strong focus on practical and investigative work for pupils of all ages encourages curiosity and a scientific approach to testing ideas.
- Cross curricular links are developed very effectively, for example through science themed work in English lessons, the use of scientific data in data handling activities in maths lessons and measuring the effect of exercise on heart rate in a physical education lesson.
- Wide ranging enrichment activities including visits, speakers and science themed weeks promote enjoyment of science very effectively. Very good use is being made of local links including a secondary school and a university thermal mapping project.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

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

- The development of science in the school has been led excellently by the science coordinator, leading to the achievement of the Primary Science Quality Mark Gold Award.
- Very thorough analyses of science assessment data for different groups of pupils are carried out, and this information is used to plan further improvements.
- The monitoring of science provision is thorough and includes checks of planning, book scrutiny, and pupil discussions. Although a few observations of science lessons are carried out this is not organised systematically.
- A strong emphasis on continuing professional development in science, both in-house and through external links, has contributed to significant improvements in science teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing a more systematic approach to the monitoring of the quality of teaching in science.

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

Ruth James
Her Majesty's Inspector