

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs P Wetton
Headteacher
Helpringham School
Highgate
Helpringham
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 0RD

Dear Mrs Wetton

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 28 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 subject documentation; scrutinies of pupils' work; analyses of achievement data, observation of six lessons jointly with the headteacher; and a tour of the school and its resources. Discussions also took place with a representative from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of science is good

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of knowledge, skills and understanding that is typical for their age. However, this varies from year-to-year due to the small size of year groups. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average. In the past year, virtually all pupils attained the expected level 4 and almost half the group attained the higher level 5.
- During their time at the school pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas and in developing

their skills of scientific enquiry. This was reflected in the good progress seen in the lessons observed.

- All groups of pupils make similar good 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.
- Pupils enjoy science and quickly become absorbed in designing and carrying out their own investigations. They behave well in lessons and particularly like the practical nature of the subject and solving scientific problems.

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 engage pupils in learning about scientific ideas and concepts. The opportunities provided for pupils to explore their own ideas and predictions make a good contribution to the development of their skills of scientific enquiry.
- In the majority of lessons teachers plan activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. However, this is not always the case and on occasions activities are not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers make good use of talk partners, pair work and questioning to explore and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and concepts and to plan their own experiments. This adds to their engagement and enjoyment.
- Marking gives pupils clear advice about the next steps to their learning and this advice is followed up by teachers to ensure that pupils continue to make progress. However, assessment levels and success criteria are not always shared with pupils. On these occasions pupils are less sure of how well they are doing.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The science curriculum is well planned and delivered as a discreet subject. Good links are made with learning in other subjects and topics.
- The curriculum has a strong emphasis on the development of key scientific concepts together with testing these out through practical work and asking questions. Opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own investigations are very well integrated into the schemes of work.
- Learning is effectively enhanced through opportunities provided by 'Science Week' held each summer term to study science more deeply through themes that are relevant and interesting to pupils.

- A good range of visits, and in-school activities enhances the science curriculum and provides pupils with additional enjoyable experiences outside the classroom. The school holds the gold award for 'Food for Life' which promotes and encourages pupils to live healthily and to look after their bodies. Pupils grow their own vegetables and learn how to cook them.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

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

- Science leadership is shared by two teachers who pool their ideas and plans to good effect.
- Science leaders have established a clear vision for science teaching at the school. They aim to maintain a high profile of science in the school and for pupils to leave with a love of learning for science.
- An effective system is in place to monitor and check pupils' progress as they move through the school. This enables teachers and leaders to have a clear view of pupils' overall progress in science and who need additional support to meet their targets.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluation are simple and effective and the science leaders have a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses which guide developments.
- 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
- sharing assessment information and success criteria with pupils in class regularly so that they all know how well they are doing.

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

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector