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11 February 2013

Mr J Rowlands
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rowlands

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 22 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; information about pupils' attainment and progress, and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- At Key Stage 1, most pupils attain at least the expected Level 2 in science with an above average proportion of pupils attaining higher than this.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 is also above average with most pupils, according to school assessment records, gaining the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6 and the majority reaching Level 5. This represents good achievement.
- Although the achievement of pupils who require extra help compares favourably to all pupils nationally, it is not as high as their peers in the school.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium make good progress in science.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and say they enjoy science. Pupils are invariably polite, friendly and courteous.
- Pupils work well in science lessons and most make good progress. However the learning of pupils who require extra help slows when the work they are given to do is not matched well enough to their needs.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teaching is consistently good and lessons well planned, however planning does not always take into account the needs of less able pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they use information and communication technology well to help students understand what they are being taught. For example teachers are using video clips and high quality images as aids to explain scientific ideas.
- Relationships between the pupils and their teachers in science lessons are good, with a positive atmosphere in the classroom.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and teachers' comments recognise pupils' hard work. However, these comments do not always make clear what pupils need to do to improve.
- In the Early Years and Foundation Stage there are a good range of activities to help the children understand the world around them.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and enjoyable science experience; helping them to develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. Increasing the pupils' knowledge of science is given greater emphasis than the strand of scientific enquiry. This does lead to good science subject knowledge. Parents of former pupils say the receiving High School comments favourably on this. But there is scope for more teaching time to be assigned to the development of pupils' practical and investigative skills.
- The school grounds are used as a resource to support the learning of pupils in the Early Years and Foundation Stage. The wooded area gives the children real life experiences of living things and the environment.
- The weekly 'Mad Science' club and a range of science themed days, for example the 'Electricity Day' play an important role in maintaining pupils' motivation and interest in science.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

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

- Leaders and managers have successfully focused on directing time and resources to improving pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy as a

priority. Consequently, as in many primary schools, there has been limited staff training directly related to science teaching and learning.

- Good records are kept of pupils work, teaching quality in science, and the coordinator monitors regular work scrutiny activities to ensure consistent coverage of the national curriculum.
- The school has a system for checking pupils' progress against their targets in science, based on at least three formal measuring points a year. Teachers moderate their judgements within the Year group, and this is checked by the subject coordinator. This informs school leaders about pupil progress, but precise progress targets are not shared with the pupils. Pupils are unable to work out how well they are doing.
- Plans to make better use of the school site as a science learning resource are in place.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to develop activities that meet the needs of all pupils and particularly those pupils who require extra help
- providing more opportunities for pupils to design their own experiments and carry out scientific investigations
- making sure that teachers' comments on pupils' work are informative and describe what pupils need to do to improve
- making sure that pupils are aware of their targets in science so that they can gauge their own progress.

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

Charles Lowry
Her Majesty's Inspector