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Mrs R Toal
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Toal

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 4 February 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; and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is in line with that expected for their age when they enter the reception class. By the time they join Year 1 their knowledge and understanding is above that expected for their age.
- All pupils have attained the expected level 4 at the end of Year 6 for the past three years. The percentage attaining the higher level 5 is just above average.
- Pupils made at least good progress in all the lessons observed during this inspection and this reflects the good progress they make during their time in the school.

- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make similar, good progress.
- Pupils enjoy science and are very keen to become involved in practical activities and learn new things. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about teaching science. Lessons are planned well and contain a variety of activities that actively involve pupils in learning.
- The lessons observed during this visit had a very clear focus on developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss and share their emerging understanding of new scientific ideas by the effective use of paired and group work. This aids their understanding and helps develop their scientific vocabulary.
- Classroom relationships are a strength of all lessons. Teachers manage pupils with quiet authority and are courteous and considerate. Pupils respond in kind, reacting extremely well to their adult role models.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed to support disabled pupils or those with special educational needs.
- Pupils know their targets and how well they are doing. The marking of pupils work is regular and helpful, with clear targets set about how to improve; however, there are not enough instances of pupils acting on teachers' guidance to make improvements to their work.
- Teachers generally use their knowledge of what pupils' can and cannot do to pitch activities at the full ability range of the class. However, some lessons lack sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- There is good coverage of National Curriculum requirements in each mixed-age class with links between subjects being used very effectively. This ensures that science is taught within topics that have real relevance and interest to pupils.
- The curriculum has a clear focus on developing pupils' sense of curiosity and their skills of scientific enquiry
- Pupils' interest and experience of science is significantly enriched by a range of activities outside the normal run of science lessons. For example, there is a gardening group, the school has the eco silver award and there are strong links with a school in Kenya with a focus on sustainability

projects. A number of science based trips and visits also enhance pupils' enjoyment of science.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

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

- There is a culture of high expectation in the school, reflected in the challenging targets set for pupils.
- The headteacher and science leader provide clear direction and strong leadership for science. They have ensured that science in the school has a clear focus on developing pupils' sense of curiosity in the world around them.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment in science is secure and a system is in place to track the progress of pupils towards their targets. However, a more frequent and fine judgement of pupils' attainment would enable faster identification of any pupils who are making less than expected progress.
- Formal monitoring of science provision has been limited over the past couple of years. However, the school's view of science provision based on informal monitoring reflects the findings of this inspection. Leaders are well aware of the strengths and areas in need of improvement in science provision and take effective action to address the issues they identify.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring all lessons provide higher attaining pupils with a suitable level of challenge
- ensuring that pupils' attainment is more finely assessed and tracked more frequently, so that any pupil who is making less than expected progress is quickly identified.

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

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector