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18 December 2006

Mrs Houldey
The Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Houldey

Ofsted survey inspection programme – science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11-12 December 2006 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards in science are outstanding.

- Standards in science are well above the national average in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. Compared with pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7, test and examination results in Year 9, Year 11 and the sixth form show that pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils demonstrate great maturity and very positive attitudes towards learning. They respond well to innovative teaching, get fully involved in lessons and thoroughly enjoy the challenge of assessing their own learning.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in science is outstanding.

- Teaching is meticulously planned, delivered with great subject expertise and enthusiasm, and most is highly individualised in order to ensure that all pupils learn very effectively.
- Teachers work exceptionally well to deploy a wide range of teaching methods, many of which stimulate the pupils to become independent learners.
- Assessment is very thorough and accurate. It is highly effective in showing pupils how well they are learning and how they might need to improve aspects of their work.
- Pupils speak very highly of their teachers and do not believe that the service they receive could be any better than it is.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The curriculum offered in science is tailored to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum well.
- There is a wide variety of resources, including practical work that is an integral part of lessons.
- The school has chosen new GCSE science courses that are relevant to the needs of all the pupils. These ensure that pupils have a good preparation of the skills necessary for progression to A Level and that science is perceived by all as interesting and worthwhile.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management in Science are outstanding.

- The head of department provides an excellent climate in which the considerable talents of all the staff are used to their best advantage.
- Self evaluation is rigorous, evidence based and very carefully used to identify and deal with areas for improvement.

Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- Strategies for differentiation are made explicit in planning and are highly effective.
- The performance data show that no group is showing poorer progress than others. In class also there is good evidence of all groups making excellent progress.

- All pupils, whatever their ability, take the opportunities offered to them to be fully involved in their own learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop and make explicit the range of learning outcomes in all lessons, and regularly check how well pupils have met their individual targets.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Alison J Thomson (Dr)
Additional Inspector