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Miss J R Phythian
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Dear Miss Phythian

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 September 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in science are good.

- The proportion of pupils achieving level 4, the standard expected for 11 year olds in Key Stage 2 national tests, is consistently high and in 2006 all pupils achieved at least this level.
- In 2006 a smaller proportion of pupils achieved level 5 in Key Stage 2 tests than is found nationally, although this figure was slightly higher in 2006 than in 2005.
- Pupils achieve very well in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2. They are confident and articulate. They clearly enjoy their science lessons and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

Teaching and learning in science are good.

- There is a good range of activities in lessons which interest and motivate pupils, as well as helping them to understand scientific concepts.
- Teachers' explanations are clear.
- Question and answer techniques are used effectively, and give pupils opportunities to offer longer explanations as well as short answers.
- Well planned teaching enables pupils across the range of abilities to participate fully.
- Occasionally opportunities for learning are missed.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The thematic approach to the whole school curriculum helps to ensure that cross curricular links are made when appropriate.
- Several themes feature science as the lead subject. Examples include 'healthy eating' at Key Stage 1 and 'earth and space', and 'light and sound' at Key Stage 2.
- Practical demonstrations, role play exercises and investigations are all used to develop understanding and promote enthusiasm for science.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- You provide clear, strong leadership, and you are ably supported by the science coordinator.
- The schools self-evaluation recognises the need to improve Key Stage 2 test results for more able pupils. Appropriate strategies have been put in place to address this, although these have not yet had enough impact on standards.
- There is a clear and effective strategy in place for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Planning and documentation are thorough and effective.
- Detailed assessment records are kept and information is shared when children move to a different class.

Inclusion

- Pupils with additional learning needs are well supported in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Lessons are planned effectively to meet the needs of pupils with different learning styles and abilities and to ensure that all pupils participate.
- Teaching assistants provide particularly effective support during groupwork.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the proportion of pupils who achieve level 5 in science in Key Stage 2 national tests
- further developing pupils' skills in the analysis and interpretation of data to ensure that they are well prepared to answer questions requiring these skills
- continuing to develop the use of formative assessment data in planning teaching and learning to meet all pupils' needs.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop science in the school.

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

Ruth James
Her Majesty's Inspector