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Mrs Hector
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hector

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 October 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.

- Standards are broadly average and pupils achieve well overall. Achievement is good from reception to Year 5 and in Year 6 it is satisfactory.
- Pupils' understanding and knowledge is good overall and most pupils explain what they know and understand well.
- Orally, Year 6 pupils show that what they know and understand is good, although they need considerable help to structure what they say. Their writing is limited and gives little detail of their knowledge and there is no extended writing that helps them to think about and explain their understanding.

- In Years 2 to 5 the quality of written work is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of 'fair testing' and are familiar with investigative work.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy science. They listen to each other, discuss what they do in practical work, and help each other. They behave well and have positive attitudes to science. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Quality of teaching and learning of Science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- Lessons are challenging and work is generally well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. This is true in the Reception and Year 1 class, the Year 2 and Year 3 class and for Years 4 and 5 in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class.
- While the nature of the science covered with Year 6 pupils is challenging, the writing tasks are not challenging enough. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in ways that get pupils to illustrate their understanding.
- Teachers have sound knowledge of how well pupils perform. They make satisfactory use of assessment information overall but it is underdeveloped in terms of setting targets for pupils. However, it is improving.
- Marking is informative and gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
- Teachers include many investigations and opportunities for independent work in lessons and pupils respond well to this.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and organise a wide range of interesting tasks.
- Teachers manage pupils well and establish good relationships.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- National Curriculum requirements are met. Subject plans indicate full coverage.
- Schemes of work indicate that there are planned opportunities for pupils to speak, listen and write. This is evident in pupils' work, though less so in Year 6.
- Schemes of work show that the school works hard, and reviews its efforts, to ensure the needs of pupils of all abilities and ages are met. The school is aware of issues for Year 6 pupils and is currently planning changes to meet these pupils' needs more effectively.
- There is a good range of enrichment and extracurricular activities.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- Science is well led and managed by the headteacher and part-time co-ordinator. Plans for supporting and training the new part-time co-ordinator, including taking an active role in evaluating provision, are good.
- Monitoring and evaluating procedures are good. They have identified significant issues and are leading to improvements in the curriculum and assessment. Evaluation of lessons gives judgements about the quality of teaching and clear pointers on how teaching can improve.
- The school has a clear focus on raising standards in science.
- There is good support for staff in terms of resources and in developing ICT and assessment skills.
- Involvement in training initiatives is satisfactory overall and has led to improvements in ICT, assessment and the teaching of investigations.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is satisfactory.

- Work is matched closely to pupils' needs from Reception to Year 5, and is extremely good in Years 2 and 3.
- The match of work to pupils' needs is satisfactory in Year 6. There is not a sharp enough focus on helping the small number of pupils in the year to express their understanding more accurately and comprehensively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- giving pupils in Year 6 more opportunities to explain their understanding and knowledge, particularly in writing, so that they achieve as well as they can
- improving assessment procedures in science so that detailed, accurate information can be used to set pupils targets to help them make further progress.

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

Ted Wheatley
Additional Inspector