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28 March 2007

Mrs Mullen
Headteacher
Alverstoke C of E Junior School
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Dear Mrs Mullen

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 March 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.

- Current standards in science are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Some of the more able pupils are able to deal with abstract concepts and show considerable understanding of complex scientific ideas such as gravity.
- Standards in science dipped in 2006 although they remained above national levels. The school rapidly introduced strategies to remedy the situation.

- Analysis of information on pupil performance indicates that, in the past, more able pupils did not make enough progress across the key stage. However a comparison of attainment levels on entry to the key stage shows that many pupils started in Year 3 with higher levels in science than in their other subjects, particularly writing

Quality of teaching and learning in science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good with some outstanding features.

- Teaching focuses strongly on an experimental approach using a wide range of strategies to develop all aspects of the investigative process.
- Teachers are confident in teaching science and have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement.
- Teachers plan for a variety of activities in each lesson to meet the pupils' diverse needs. Within this planning there are particular examples of innovative strategies that link directly to the pupils' own interests.
- Pupils respond well to this approach. They speak enthusiastically about their science lessons and see it as a very practical subject. Pupils also understand the need to think about and analyse the outcomes of investigations so that they can improve their skills and the quality of their work.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Science is taught as a separate subject. The science team are writing their own scheme of work using QCA and published schemes as resource and stimulus materials. The scheme is being carefully designed to make sure it meets the learning needs of the pupils and to make science exciting and engaging.
- The curriculum incorporates many opportunities for developing pupils' thinking and learning skills through explorations and investigations.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- Science is managed and planned very effectively by an innovative grouping of three members of the school including a governor with a science background. The team has an up to date picture of the current situation in science and a clear vision for future direction.
- Curriculum creativity is being positively encouraged and has good potential for making science more interesting and relevant to the pupils.

- The team is developing pupil focused target setting strategies in science based on the good practice that exists in other core subjects.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- The school monitors the progress of individuals carefully and uses assessment data well to keep an eye on any trends that develop.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do very well in this school and are supported by a caring environment that understands and meets their needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop a robust initial analysis of pupils' attainment in science, especially at the higher levels, when they start Key Stage 2
- introduce pupil focused target setting strategies in science.

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

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector