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Mrs Lack
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lack

Ofsted survey inspection programme – science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 June 2007 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards in science are average and achievement is satisfactory

- Standards in science at the end of Year 2 are above average.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have remained fairly static for the past five years. They were slightly below the national average in 2006.
- The school's system for tracking pupil progress is robust and indicates that standards at the end of Year 6 are due to rise to national average levels this summer.
- The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. However, pupils make better progress in Key Stage 1 than they do in Key Stage 2.
- All groups of pupils make similar progress in science.
- The behaviour and attitudes to learning of pupils' is good. They are keen to learn and willingly engage in activities provided for them during lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory.

- During the inspection, lessons observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory.
- The school is developing strategies to share good practice between teachers.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about science and there were good relationships in all the lessons observed.
- Teachers share learning objectives and in the best lessons success criteria are made clear to pupils.
- In the good and better lessons there is a range of interesting activities that are pitched at the appropriate level for all pupils in the class. Effective questioning is used to develop and check pupils' learning. Good opportunities are also provided for pupils to learn through planning and carrying out scientific investigations.
- In one lesson a good scientific investigation planning sheet was used to help pupils design a fair experiment. This approach is not consistently used by all teachers.
- Some lessons are too teacher directed and practical work involves following instructions rather than allowing pupils to design experiments for themselves.
- The school has identified the need to develop the science subject knowledge of some teachers in Key Stage 2. Some effective training has already been provided to address this issue.
- Pupils are aware of their targets and know how well they are doing. Marking is helpful and gives pupils useful advice about how to improve their work.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in science is satisfactory.

- The scheme of work covers the requirements of the national curriculum.
- Curriculum planning ensures that there is progression in the teaching and learning of key ideas and skills in science.
- There is a strong emphasis on scientific investigation and problem solving in Key Stage 1. This emphasis is less clear in Key Stage 2.
- The school has developed the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in science well since the last inspection. A useful booklet has been produced informing teachers about programmes and websites that can be used to aid pupils' learning in science.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management in science are satisfactory.

- The new science co-ordinator has carried out an audit of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. This has identified some key areas for improvement related to improving teachers' subject knowledge and developing the use of scientific investigations.

- The actions taken in response to this review are beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress in Key Stage 2.
- Robust systems are in place to monitor pupil progress within science. The school has recently introduced a new electronic tracking system that will aid this process.
- The science co-ordinator has an accurate view of the strengths and areas in need of development in science. The science development plan addresses these issues, although the success criteria are not sufficiently specific or measurable

Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is good.

- There are good relationships between all pupils and teachers. Pupils enjoy science.
- Pupils are provided with equal opportunities to learn and be fully engaged in activities.
- Analysis of data describing pupil progress shows that there is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- further developing strategies to share the good and outstanding teaching and learning practice in the school with all teachers
- providing more opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn through designing and carrying out their own investigations
- developing a more consistent approach to planning scientific investigations
- ensuring that the success criteria in the science development plan are more specific and measurable.

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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector