

19 June 2007

Mrs F Swallow  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Swallow

Ofsted survey inspection programme – science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 June 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 informal discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

#### Achievement and Standards

Achievement and standards in science are good.

- From a broadly average starting point, children make good progress and generally reach above average standards with a high proportion of children reaching the higher levels at Year 2 and 5.
- The presentation and recording of work are of a high standard.
- Children's personal development is promoted well, largely because children undertake investigations frequently. The investigations promote good attitudes to science and provide opportunities for children to work successfully with others, often with children of different ability to their own.
- Every Child Matters outcomes are developed well. Science lessons promote children's enjoyment, their knowledge of staying safe and being healthy. Their

future economic well-being is fostered effectively in these lessons by building fundamental thinking skills such as observation, deduction and prediction.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- All teachers plan science lessons very thoroughly, making key learning objectives explicit and meeting National Curriculum requirements in full.
- Lessons are practical. Teachers are skilled questioners and listeners who involve children fully in lessons. Lesson time is used flexibly, to give children the opportunity to complete their investigations.
- Children's behaviour is good, especially when they are planning and undertaking experiments.
- Teachers' assessment of learning is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants keep detailed notes on children's progress and make excellent use of digital cameras to record learning in lessons. Such assessments, annotated with children's writing, build into records of achievement that are of high quality.
- Some teaching encourages children to explore phenomena very well, as when a group of Year 4/5 children thought that the colour of insulating material might affect its efficiency as an insulator and were encouraged to find out. However, not all teaching promotes investigation so well, providing too much in the way of answers, rather than the questions that will encourage children to think scientifically.

### Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Despite not having been reviewed recently, the curriculum is broad, balanced and, because it is rooted in science investigation, exciting. The school is already engaged in determining the direction of science teaching in the school for the future, and is planning to improve the relevance of the science curriculum by relating it more to the locality.
- Teachers make good links with other subjects, such as design technology, music, ICT, and PSHE.
- Visits, visitors and an extra-curricular 'Environment Club' enhance the science curriculum.

### Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are good.

- Science is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. You provide clear strategic direction for science and oversee the rigorous tracking of children's progress.

- Governors are involved in monitoring the work of the school, including reporting on science.
- The school has robust transition arrangements with the associated middle school.
- Professional development in science is undertaken through the local authority and through local networks of schools.

## Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is good.

- Despite the school's small size, it educates and cares for the full range of children's abilities and aptitudes, including children with statements of special educational need and those in need of social care. The school ensures children of all backgrounds have full access to science lessons and investigations.
- Open-ended investigations promote the interest and achievement of the higher attaining children in particular, but also that of individual children who are not high attaining in other, less practical subjects.
- Science investigations are used to promote children's social development well, by encouraging children to work with others with different skills and aptitudes from their own.

With consistently good achievement, provision and leadership and management of science, there are no outstanding areas for improvement. However, we discussed developing science on the following lines:

- encouraging teachers to ask more of the 'why', 'what if', 'how' questions that will encourage scientific thinking
- encourage the recording of science in even freer ways
- encourage greater relevance in the science curriculum when it is reviewed next year.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett  
Her Majesty's Inspector