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11 October 2007

Mr R Dungate
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Dungate

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 9 October 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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards in science are average and achievement is satisfactory.

- Overall standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are average. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 is below average and below that seen in English and mathematics.
- Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 is average although it is below that seen in English and mathematics.
- The progress made by pupils is satisfactory. However, the relative progress made by more able pupils is below that of other groups of pupils in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in all the lessons seen were at least good. Pupils enjoy science and talk with enthusiasm about work they have done.

- Pupils' awareness of the environment and environmental issues is good due to their involvement in activities related to the school's Eco-School status.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

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

- All the lessons seen were either satisfactory or good.
- All lessons are planned around clear learning objectives and contain a range of interesting activities. This ensures that pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear explanations to pupils and use effective questioning to check and develop learning.
- Some lessons lack pace and this limits the rate of learning to being no better than satisfactory.
- Some lessons do not provide sufficient challenge to the more able pupils.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum covers National Curriculum requirements and is based around published schemes of work.
- Schemes of work identify opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of scientific enquiry.
- The two year planning cycle for the mixed age classes ensures that key scientific concepts are revisited in different years as pupils move through the school.
- The school provides pupils with a good range of scientifically related trips and activities. A large number of pupils are involved in activities related to the school's Eco-School status.
- There is little evidence of planning work to meet the needs of all pupils within medium term schemes of work, but planning work to meet different needs becomes evident in short term planning.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management in science are satisfactory.

- The science co-ordinator has maintained a clear focus on developing children's sense of enquiry and interest in science.
- The school has carried out a good analysis of the performance of pupils in the 2007 Key Stage 2 tests. This has identified some areas for development.
- The quality of teaching and learning in science is monitored by both you and the science co-ordinator.
- Systems for target setting and tracking pupil progress are not as well developed in science as they are in English and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils in science is monitored as they move through the school. However, their progress is not checked against targets as these are not currently set in science.

- The science development plan does not have a sufficient focus on raising the achievement of more able pupils.

Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is good.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils work well together when asked to carry out practical work and investigations.
- Boys and girls achieve similarly.
- More able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in science and so fewer pupils than expected reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that all science lessons provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils
- developing the system of target setting and pupil tracking in science so that it is similar to the systems used in English and mathematics
- ensuring that the science development plan has a clear focus on raising the achievement of more able pupils.

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