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Ms J Sumner
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sumner

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 November 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- The standards attained by pupils and the progress they make have risen rapidly and significantly over the past three years.
- From being significantly below other schools in 2005, achievement of pupils has been significantly better than similar schools in 2006 and 2007.
- Both in terms of performance data and evidence from lesson observations all groups of pupils are showing good progress.
- Improvements in standards are due to a number of factors including the implementation of an effective assessment and tracking system, better clarity of focus in teaching, greater use of the Primary National Strategy framework and assessment for learning techniques.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they demonstrate good relationships with each other and with their teachers.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- All lessons observed were good and no significant differences were seen in the quality of teaching across all the key stages.
- The lessons are well structured and show similar characteristics of clear learning objectives and a focus on how effective learning is.
- The good quality of planning underpins the good teaching.
- The school's own programme of lesson observations and evaluation describes teaching in science as good.
- Many staff have a good knowledge of science and, because they work collaboratively, teachers are supported in areas in which they feel less confident.
- Teaching is well resourced and teachers use ICT well to stimulate and inform pupils.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and create a positive and secure environment for learning.
- Pupils are very well behaved and show high levels of application; off task activity is hardly seen.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum is good.

- The well planned curriculum covers all the requirements of the national Curriculum.
- Good quality planning had produced a rational sequence of learning that is well contextualised and relates well to the lives of pupils.
- The senior leadership team make sure that long term planning sets out a sensible sequence for learning, and teachers collaborate for each year group to produce detailed medium and short term plans.
- The school prepares its pupils well for transition between key stages in the school and to the local secondary schools.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including science club, gardening club, visiting speakers/presenters and visits out of school e.g. to the London Science Museum.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- You and your senior leadership team have brought about changes in the school that have made an impact on science to a point where it has the highest achievement of the three core subjects.
- The self-evaluation carried out is detailed, well-evidenced and gives rise to appropriate development planning. They evaluate the impact of actions they take on the success of pupils.
- The assessment and tracking system you have introduced has increased the focus on the learning of individuals and assiduous analysis keeps them informed of the performance of all groups.

- The science co-coordinator has produced documentation that is fit for purpose and reflects the school's drive to raise standards.
- The co-ordinator has undertaken training on data analysis and gives a clear account of science in the school. She contributes well to the collaborative ethos of the school.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- The assessment and tracking system ensures the performance of individuals is evaluated and any underachievement is tackled.
- The data on performance show that there is no significant underperformance of any group of pupils.
- Pupils with particular learning difficulties or disabilities are making good progress in line with the rest of the school population.
- In lessons teachers skilfully ensure that all pupils participate and receive appropriate science education.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- introducing more lesson observation by the co-ordinator and by peers
- implementing a wider range of assessment for learning techniques.

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

Ian Richardson
Her Majesty's Inspector