

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



22 October 2007

Mr Redpath
Headteacher
Preston Park Junior School
College Road
Wembley
Middlesex
HA9 8RJ

Dear Mr Redpath

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 15 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory

- Key Stage 1 achievements in science improved in 2007 but were below both Brent and national averages. However, a substantial proportion of children arrive at the school in the early stage of learning English.
- At Key Stage 2 achievements in science have remained substantially the same for the past three years. However, the proportion of pupils achieving level five increased in 2007.
- Value added analyses suggest that pupils make progress at both key stages broadly in line with predicted progress.
- The school's analysis of achievements by gender, ethnicity and ability is thorough and accurate. The school is taking appropriate action to support identified underachievement.
- The standard of pupils' work in science lessons is good. They show enthusiasm for science and take part in interesting practical work. They answer teachers' questions sensibly and are beginning to use appropriate

vocabulary. They also collaborate well in small groups and plan investigations effectively.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

Teaching and learning in science are good

- Science lessons are well planned. The teachers are confident, encourage the pupils and expect high standards of behaviour.
- Practical work is well planned and safely carried out. For example laptop computers linked to data logging equipment were well used by pupils to investigate the effect of exercise on heart rate.
- Living organisms are effectively used to enthuse and engage pupils in science. For example, a Year 4 class were fully involved when investigating the adaptations of woodlice to their environment.
- Pupils' ideas on empathy and respect were well developed through the sensitive use of a pet rabbit and a toy rabbit to encourage Year 1 pupils to discuss the characteristics of living and non-living things.
- Pupils display good behaviour in science lessons and work well in groups, sharing equipment and making measurements calmly.
- Teachers are skilled at asking directed questions to check understanding and to informally monitor progress.
- Learning support assistants are very effective in supporting groups of pupils whose literacy levels might otherwise hold back progress in science.
- In some lessons pupils were not always sure why procedures were being emphasised and occasionally too much time was spent planning to the detriment of observing, measuring and recording.
- Assessment is sound and pupils' progress is well tracked and monitored.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum in meeting the needs of the pupils is good.

- The science curriculum is balanced throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and topics are well sequenced. Scientific enquiry (Sc1) is effectively integrated into work leading to progress in the other attainment targets in science.
- Science lessons are flexibly timetabled on Thursdays. This allows teachers to extend pupils' investigations and to complete discussion and writing where appropriate.
- The range of extra curricular activities is very good and the activities contribute to the breadth of scientific experiences that pupils benefit from.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- Recent staff appointments have renewed and strengthened science teaching across the school. Two science co-ordinators for the key stages have been in post since September 2007 in order to delegate more responsibility for, and develop more ownership of, the science curriculum across the school.

- The science co-ordinators are well qualified enthusiasts for science who are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have access to relevant training and development and will attend a new science co-ordinator's event at the Science Learning Centre in London in November.
- A thorough audit of science provision has been completed and has resulted in an action plan with measurable targets. Staff development needs have been clarified, schemes of work reviewed and modified, and more emphasis given to monitoring pupils' progress across the key stages.
- Flexible timetabling for science lessons allows teachers to extend activities where appropriate.
- The school has put in place a wide range of well managed enrichment activities and visits, sometimes in partnership with local secondary schools, which put science in a wider context for the pupils.
- There is evidence of good collaboration with partner schools. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from well organised link activities and are well prepared for progression to secondary education.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good and is a key strength of the school.

- The data on pupils' progress show that no particular group is being less well served than other groups in the school.
- It is clear from lesson observations and scrutiny of work that pupils are being effectively included. No differences were seen in the way pupils are given access to the science work, whatever their gender, ability or ethnic heritage.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making sure that there is a balance between planning investigations and carrying them out
- developing the use of assessment for learning in science through Sc1.

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

Alex Falconer
Her Majesty's Inspector