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Mr P Callaway
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Callaway

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 1 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in science are good.

- Standards are above average, and results of the end of Year 6 national tests were better in 2007 than in the previous year. All pupils, whatever their prior attainment, achieve well throughout the school.
- Pupils have good investigative skills. They predict and explain their predictions and plan investigations with 'fair testing' in mind.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are good. They measure accurately, check their results, work out averages, and check the reliability of measurements they make.
- Pupils' achievement in science benefits from the school's successful efforts to encourage pupils' literacy skills. Pupils discuss their ideas about what will happen in investigations, they talk about what they find out and

explain their reasoning and understanding. Their writing indicates good understanding and they express their knowledge carefully and accurately.

- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils work well together and are enthusiastic about science. They behave sensibly and they conduct practical work safely, with due regard for themselves and others.

Quality of teaching and learning of Science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- Teachers plan lessons well with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils. The three-part lesson strategy is used well. In particular, teachers use the ends of lessons effectively to pull ideas together and to clarify any misunderstandings.
- Work is challenging and pupils respond well and work hard. Teachers provide a wide range of activities that makes sure all pupils are suitably challenged. They use a variety of approaches to meet the needs of individual pupils well.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall and they make sure that lessons move at a fast pace.
- Teachers use questioning and discussion effectively. This is very effective in helping pupils achieve well because it makes sure that they express their understanding and explain what they know accurately, and independently. In addition, teachers use a wide range of scientific terminology and encourage pupils to use it accurately in their written work and when they speak.
- Marking is variable. It does not always give a useful picture of what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve. Tracking of pupils' progress is satisfactory, but does not give a clear indication of where pupils achieve well or underachieve.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It is well organised and contains well-planned opportunities for frequent investigative work.
- The curriculum is relevant to pupils' experiences and needs in the modern world, and this helps capture their interest and attention.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are planned effectively. The use of computers to extend pupils' information and communication technology skills is satisfactory.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and for those who are gifted and talented.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- There is a clear focus on raising standards, and in establishing common teaching approaches to do so. The work the school has done to enhance pupils' literacy skills, so that they explain their understanding and knowledge well, has been particularly effective in raising standards.
- The subject leader has successfully established investigative science throughout the school. There are common approaches to how teachers organise investigations, giving pupils a coherent experience as they move through the school.
- The quality of evaluation is good, with lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and examination of teachers' planning. This is followed by comprehensive support for colleagues as required.
- The school has accurately identified the area of assessment as one where considerable development is needed.
- Resources are well managed.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- Work is well matched to pupils' needs and there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or the most and least able pupils.
- Teachers are sensitive to pupils' individual needs and work closely with support staff to make sure all pupils have access to tasks.

The areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making sure that tracking records of pupils' progress gives a clear picture of where there is good achievement or underachievement
- marking which consistently informs pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
- improving teachers' skills in assessing pupils' performance in scientific enquiry.

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

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley
Additional Inspector