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Mrs A Chadderton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Chadderton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 17 October to look at work in science.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of science, the visit had a particular focus on transition within and between phases, and the range of learning experiences and status of SC1.

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, students' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- At Key Stage 2 national test results were in line with the national average in 2007. They were better in 2006 when the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected was well above average. The dip in results in 2007 is associated with the 2007 cohort having lower prior attainment at Key Stage 1.
- Pupil's progress is at least satisfactory and for some pupils it is good.
- Behaviour in the lessons observed and around school was very good.

## Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, encouraging and supportive.
- Good use is made of investigative work.
- Lessons are well planned and structured.
- Pupils clearly enjoy science. They are motivated, attentive, engaged and keen to do well.
- Very good use is made of 'talk partners' in lessons which gives all pupils an opportunity to explore their ideas about science with others.
- Teacher explanations are clear.
- Good use is made of scientific vocabulary in lessons, by both teachers and pupils.
- Appropriate use is made of targets for individuals, particularly with older pupils.
- Very good use is made of electronic whiteboards in lessons and this enhances learning.
- Marking of pupils' books focuses appropriately on whether the learning objectives for the lessons have been achieved.

## Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in science is good.

- There is very good planning for cross-curricular links that are made in lessons.
- There are some good enrichment activities to enhance the curriculum.
- The topic based Key Stage 1 curriculum is used well to develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding and to put science into context.
- There are few opportunities for extended writing in science.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- Operational management is highly effective.
- There is an effective self evaluation of science which is thorough and detailed.
- Monitoring of science is also very thorough and includes lesson observations, discussions with pupils, work scrutiny and examination of planning documents.
- Good use is made of staff development opportunities, both within school and using the local authority services.
- Documentation is of very good quality.
- Very good use is made of peer mentoring to share good practice. Records show that this has been valuable in developing teachers' skills in teaching science.
- Appropriate attention is given to specific management issues such as mixed year group classes to ensure that all pupils receive science teaching appropriate to their age and ability.

## Subject issues

Provision for scientific enquiry and for transition between stages is good.

- Very good use is made of investigations and experiments, and pupils are well supported in developing their own skills in planning experiments.
- 'Discovery Dog' software is used well with pupils in Key Stage 1 to develop their understanding of scientific enquiry.
- Teachers' planning includes at least one investigation for each science unit studied.
- The use of 'talk partners' helps pupils to develop their understanding of scientific enquiry by sharing and discussing their ideas with others.
- The Key Stage 1 topic based curriculum builds on pupils learning in the Foundation Stage.
- In addition to the general transition arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary school, pupils study transition units in science at the end of Year 6.
- The movement of teachers from one year group to the next one up helps to ensure that they have a very good understanding of the science work covered in the previous year, and so to have appropriately challenging expectations of pupils.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in science is good.

- Teaching assistants are generally used well to support pupils.
- Planning takes account of individual needs. For example, pupils with communication difficulties are supported by teaching assistants during 'talk partner' activities.
- Lesson planning includes differentiated support, activities and materials for pupils of different abilities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- tracking and assessment of pupils
- developing the use of literacy skills in science to help pupils improve the quality of their written explanations
- developing teachers questioning techniques to encourage pupils' deeper thinking about scientific observations and ideas.

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

Ruth James  
Her Majesty's Inspector