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Mrs L Paisley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Paisley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 November 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 good.

- Standards are above average. All pupils have achieved at least the expected standard in science by age 11 for the last three years. For each of these years the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 in national tests was above average.
- Pupils make good progress in science during their time in the school.
- Science contributes very well to pupils' excellent personal development. Examples seen during the inspection included several pupils talking about their science work in assembly in front of the whole school, and pupils working together and cooperating well in groups.

- Behaviour in the lessons observed was very good.

### Quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teachers are enthusiastic, encouraging and supportive.
- Good use is made of practical and investigative work.
- Pupils clearly enjoy science. They are motivated, attentive, engaged and keen to do well.
- Lessons include a good range of activities.
- Teachers make some good use of question and answer sessions to revise previous knowledge, check understanding and consolidate learning.
- Some good use of ICT was observed in a lesson about teeth, where short video clips provided very clear visual illustrations which effectively reinforced learning.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and their progress is tracked.
- Learning materials are well designed and of good quality.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in science is outstanding.

- There are excellent enrichment activities. These include science days with a variety of workshops led by external experts.
- Science teaching is enhanced by many relevant educational visits.
- An environmental area is used very well.
- Appropriate attention is given to cross curricular links.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- Operational management is highly effective.
- There is a clear focus on ensuring that every pupil achieves the best that he or she is capable of.
- Staff know their pupils very well as individuals, and use this knowledge well in their planning.
- Long and medium term planning documentation is comprehensive and of good quality.
- A systematic scrutiny of pupils' science work is carried out, with good feedback to teachers.
- Appropriate attention is given to specific management issues, such as changes to mixed year group classes, to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement in science.
- Moderation is carried out to ensure that assessments are appropriately marked.

### Subject issues

- Good use is made of practical work and pupils get plenty of practice planning investigations.

- Pupils develop good skills in handling basic apparatus and carrying out experiments.
- Appropriate general transition arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary school are in place. In addition, this year there are plans for Year 6 pupils to attend science workshops at one of the local secondary schools.
- Mixed year groups in some classes minimises the need for specific transition arrangements from reception to Year 1, and Year 2 to Year 3.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in science is outstanding.

- There is excellent integration of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants pay particular care to the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Teachers are astute in their observations of individual pupils, giving appropriate praise, guidance and direction, so helping them to develop a wide range of skills.
- Excellent attention and support are given to the personal development of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through their science work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included the need to:

- improve the clarity of learning objectives and the consistency of lesson planning
- in marking pupils' science work consider increasing the use of specific comments and guidance that will help pupils improve their work
- further develop the tracking of pupil progress to highlight those pupils who are on track to achieve their target level, those who are underachieving and those who are likely to exceed their target.

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