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Mrs Warburton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Warburton

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 January 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; the range of learning experiences; the status and use 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 you, the science subject leader and the Foundation and Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards are significantly higher than the national average. Achievement is satisfactory.

- The attainment of pupils entering the school is above the national average.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils show very good attainment with almost all pupils reaching Level 4 and nearly two thirds reaching level 5 in national tests.
- The progress made by pupils in science is satisfactory and is around the national average.

- The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that by Year 6 their work is completed, well presented and gives evidence of a good range of activity in science.
- There are clear efforts by staff to promote literacy in science, and a range of writing styles for different purposes is seen in the work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and where they are given responsibility they respond well and show satisfactory personal development.
- The work in science which is well contextualised is contributing satisfactorily to pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Pupils are working at a satisfactory pace, but in some lessons not all pupils are fully occupied.
- In some lessons the proportion of time given to teacher talking limits the activity of pupils and this gives rise to some inattention.
- Lessons are well planned and provide a suitable range of learning opportunities.
- In most of the lessons seen information and communication technology was under-exploited and in teacher led class activity the electronic whiteboard was only used for presenting information and not used interactively with pupils.
- Classrooms and activities are well managed.
- In the lessons seen the use of question and answer technique was mostly the use of open questions and fewer questions targeted at individuals to check understanding.
- The techniques for formative assessment to help learning were underdeveloped in the lessons seen, but there were good examples of teachers' interventions helping pupils to understand.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum provided is satisfactory.

- The school is moving away from the scheme of work offered by QCA and is planning topics for pupils that have links to a number of subjects.
- Plans have been developed by staff collaboratively to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum requirements.
- The curriculum is enriched by activities such as visits out of school to a nuclear power plant and to a nature reserve for seals.
- Teaching of scientific enquiry (SC1) has been identified rightly as a focus for development and this is seen in the provision of continuing professional development.
- The school has increased its resource base to support curriculum development, for example, by acquiring teaching and learning resources in the form of software and implementing the use of concept cartoons to promote understanding of science.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are satisfactory.

- There are clear priorities for improvement in the school development plan that provides a good basis for the development of science in the school.
- Science is showing progress higher than that seen in English or mathematics.
- The subject leader maintains good records of assessment in a systematic way and is contributing to the task of organising assessment strategies for the new context of teaching topics.
- Assessment for learning is rightly a focus for development in the school.
- Arrangements for transition of pupils within and between key stages in the school are secure, and comprehensive assessment records follow the pupils as they move between classes.

Inclusion

Inclusion in the school is satisfactory.

- Performance data do not show significant differences in the progress made between pupils of different ability.
- In classrooms no difference is seen in the access that teachers provide to participate in lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the progress pupils make in science
- implementing fully strategies for assessment for learning.

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