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Ms H Rodbourn
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Rodbourn

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Amraz Ali HMI on 2 May 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 and the science subject leader, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards are higher than the national average. Achievement is good.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been significantly above the national average for the last two years.
- Analysis of performance data shows that pupils make good progress in science and that there is a slight upward trend over the last two years.
- The data describing achievement show that pupils are making better progress in science than in mathematics or English.

- Senior leaders and the science co-ordinator recognise that better preparation of pupils for statutory tests, in balance with continuing to teach science, has contributed to the strong performance in science.
- The targeting and tracking system helps teachers to focus on the needs of individuals and to monitor their progress.
- Observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils are working above the national average standard for their age.
- The behaviour of pupils is very good and they collaborate well, taking on responsibilities for different roles to tackle a task.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning are good with some outstanding practice.

- There are good positive relationships between teachers and pupils.
- The pace of lessons is good with high levels of challenge in the best lessons.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and are effective at promoting learning in an unobtrusive and well focused way.
- Teachers demonstrate good skills of questioning and of using pupils' answers constructively to build their understanding.
- Classroom management is good and practical work is well organised and well resourced.
- The assessment and target systems are of good quality and result in teachers knowing their pupils' achievements and learning needs well.
- There are some inconsistencies in marking but most is up to date, positive and encouraging.
- ICT is well used by teachers and pupils clearly show that their skills of using ICT are well developed.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum provided is good.

- The planning in science ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met.
- Pupils are engaged in a good range of experiences and activities related to science.
- There is a good range of curriculum enrichment including visits to science related locations such as Magna and The Deep.
- There are some good links between science and other curriculum areas where there is a clear benefit. Otherwise science experiences are appropriately discrete and clearly focused on science skills, knowledge and understanding.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- The science work is guided by sound policy and development plans.

- Planning at long term is effectively secured by the co-ordinator in consultation with teachers. Class teachers plan effectively at medium and short term.
- The co-ordinator reflects on the performance in science and reports formally on an annual basis to the governing body. This self-evaluation is accurate and communicated well.
- Significant 'in house' training has taken place on scientific enquiry (Sc1) and assessment. While the co-ordinator attends local authority science co-ordinator meetings as often as possible, no other science specific professional development has taken place.
- Thorough analysis of performance data is carried out and assessments are effectively monitored through moderation procedures.

Inclusion

Inclusion in the school is good.

- Teachers show good practice in the inclusion of pupils in work, with no disadvantage to particular groups being evident.
- Performance data show that all groups of pupils are making similar progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- bringing about more consistent marking of pupils' work by ensuring it is related to science specific learning intentions
- sharing planning between teachers of different classes to share good practice and secure continuity.

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