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Mr S Whitehouse
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Whitehouse

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 June 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards in science are broadly average and achievements are satisfactory.

- Attainment at Key Stage 1 is below the national average.
- Attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved over the past five years and is now around national average. In 2007 over 95% of pupils attained level 4 or better in science, but only 29% reached level 5 or better.
- Pupils' progress in science from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is broadly satisfactory.
- Current work in science lessons is of a good standard and a wide variety of activities help pupils to use scientific thinking to explain what they observe and find out.
- Pupils are recording effectively their predictions, data and conclusions. In addition, they are developing confidence in using appropriate scientific terms when discussing their work.

- In the lessons observed, pupils' behaviour was good and they worked well together, sharing and cooperating.

Quality of teaching and learning in science

Teaching and learning in science are good.

- In the small sample of lessons observed most were good and one was satisfactory.
- Lessons are well planned with differentiated activities consistently well thought through and carried out. The wide range of abilities in class groups is well catered for through these effective differentiated tasks. This is the case in investigations and in group work.
- In addition, those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English are well supported in their science work by effective teaching assistants.
- Pupils are increasingly using information communication technology (ICT) to enhance their understanding of science. In particular, the most able were being challenged and extended.
- In a minority of cases, teachers directed pupils too much and written work dominated so that the practical activities, which the pupils enjoy, were squeezed in at the end of the lesson.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is well organised. Both formal and informal assessments are regular and rigorous.

Quality of the curriculum

The science curriculum is good.

- The science curriculum is balanced throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and topics are well sequenced. Scientific enquiry (Sc1) is effectively integrated into work leading to progress in the other attainment targets in science.
- Science lessons are timetabled to allow teachers to extend pupils' investigations and to complete discussion and writing where appropriate.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good and these contribute effectively to the breadth of scientific experiences that pupils benefit from.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management in science are good.

- Science is effectively led by an experienced subject coordinator. Teachers appreciate the well organised resource boxes that allow them to approach topics with confidence.
- Specialist resources are good, as is the relevant science-related in-service training. Teachers have recently focussed on using interactive whiteboards in practical investigations and on using ICT to display pupils' results graphically.

- The assessment framework across the school is robust and well organised. This has allowed teachers to confidently monitor pupils' progress in science and to plan appropriate interventions.
- The science position paper prepared just prior to the visit is an evaluative document that clearly sets out the strengths and areas for development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising attainment of more able pupils at Key Stage 2
- striking the right balance between pupils planning scientific investigations and carrying out practical procedures.

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

Alex Falconer
Her Majesty's Inspector