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Miss S Lunn  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Lunn

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 June 2008 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

Achievement is good and standards in science are above the national average.

- Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been above national average for the past five years. There was a slight dip in attainment in 2007, but pupils' achievements, as measured by teachers' assessments, were still significantly above average.
- At Key Stage 2 attainment has been above average and has improved over the past five years. Over 97% of the pupils attain Level 4 or better in science and almost two thirds achieve Level 5 or better.
- Despite a slight dip in 2007, progress in science between the key stages is good over the past five years.
- Boys and girls make very similar progress as do pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. In addition, school assessment data and national test scores show pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make

better progress in science than might be expected from national averages.

- Pupils work with enthusiasm in science lessons. Their behaviour is good and they share and cooperate with each other successfully. They said that they really enjoy finding out new things and carrying out their own investigations.
- The standard of work in exercise books is generally of a good standard. However, sometimes there is too much focus is on completing worksheets and not enough on explaining or demonstrating understanding.

## Quality of teaching and learning in science

Teaching and learning in science are good.

- All three lessons observed were judged to be good. Teachers are confident, well prepared and effectively use the science resources to create interest and encourage learning.
- Teachers effectively probe pupils' understanding and use directed questions skilfully, often allowing pupils time to explain and develop their thoughts.
- Practical work is good and relates both to the topic being studied and to the stage of development of the pupils.
- Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support learning. In one lesson the pupils enjoyed using a class set of digital cameras to record various habitats and organisms in the school grounds.
- When learning is most effective the teaching assistants are fully engaged with the whole class. They help individuals and groups and make sure that all, including the most able, are working well. Sometimes the support they provide focuses on too narrow a section of the pupils and they are less effective.
- Assessment in science is good. Teachers are confident about the progress being made by the pupils and the levels attained are appropriate and centrally recorded. The quality of marking is generally good but some is not diagnostic enough and there appears to be little follow-up to teachers' comments.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The school makes good use of the QCA guidance and uses the published science materials to good effect. The curriculum allows all pupils access to the National Curriculum programmes of study for science, and practical work is well embedded in the schemes of work.
- Cross-curricular topics are planned on a termly basis by year group and the science activities then taught within that framework. This has the benefit of facilitating cross curricular links. However, the school recognises that more work has to be done to make sure that the skills of planning, predicting and recording are built on.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management in science are good.

- Science is well led and standards are high. Both the science coordinator and the deputy head teacher are well qualified and confidently lead science in the school.
- Lesson observations are regularly carried out and result in helpful evaluations to bring about improvement.
- Changes in teaching staff have been effectively managed.
- The school has developed an effective science policy and a clear development plan that identifies areas for improvement along with milestones and key responsibilities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making sure that classroom assistants share good practice in order to support and encourage all pupils more effectively
- continuing to develop assessment for learning through diagnostic marking and thorough follow-up.

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