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Mrs C Murray  
Headteacher  
Greengates Community Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Murray

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 22 September 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 analysis of data, interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average.

- In 2008 at Key Stage 2, most pupils achieved at least Level 4 in science in the national test. This represents an improvement on the previous year. The proportion achieving Level 5 remained below the national average.
- Progress is satisfactory overall when starting points and contextual factors are taken into account, but weak literacy skills hinder the progress of some pupils.
- Behaviour observed in lessons was mainly good.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- In the Foundation Stage an appropriate range of activities to develop knowledge and understanding of the world was observed. This included opportunities for cooperative play and some effective adult child interactions where children were encouraged to talk about their own observations and activities.
- Teachers provide a variety of different activities in lessons to engage interest and motivate pupils. This includes some opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas about science in groups.
- Some effective use is made of practical, hands-on activities which pupils particularly enjoy.
- Some differentiation was observed in lessons but the activities set do not always challenge the more able, for whom the pace in lessons is rather slow.
- Some patient and effective directed questioning was observed.
- Relatively little use of information communication technology (ICT) was observed in lessons.
- Class teachers carry out regular assessments in science, but these are not related to individual targets.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in science is satisfactory.

- Appropriate cross curricular links are made, for example in studying healthy eating.
- The curriculum provides some opportunities to promote understanding of how science works.
- Occasional trips and visits are used to enhance the science curriculum. For example, one class visited a local museum to look at fossils.
- Insufficient attention is given to investigative work and to developing scientific literacy skills.

### Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are satisfactory.

- Day to day management is effective.
- The lack of a science coordinator means that there is little management focus on developing science as a subject at present. There is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in science.
- There has been some success in improving attainment in science at Key Stage 2.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- appointing a science coordinator to lead developments in science including individual target setting and the monitoring of progress against these
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and using evidence from observations to improve the quality of lessons
- offering more opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations

- developing more opportunities for using and improving communication and literacy skills through science work.

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