

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



11 December 2008

Mrs S Farr
Headteacher
Rolleston Primary School
Hillsborough Road
Leicester
LE2 9PT

Dear Mrs Farr

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 December 2008 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 the status and use of SC1 as well as the range of learning experiences.

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 talking to pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards of science

Standards in science are above average and achievement is good.

- Pupils start school in the foundation stage with attainment that is significantly below average and with particularly poor literacy skills.
- They make very good progress throughout the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 to reach good standards at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 reaching standards in Year 6 that are overall above average. In 2008 the percentage of pupils reached higher levels was lower than that found nationally.

- Pupils make good progress in developing their skills of scientific enquiry due to a skill based approach to science that gives greater opportunity for investigative activities.
- As a result of this approach they also really enjoy their science, participate well in lessons and are keen to learn. Behaviour is very good; pupils enjoy working in teams and sharing their experiences and opinions.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The overall quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- Teachers are knowledgeable about science and are careful to ensure misconceptions are investigated and challenged. They are skilled in using questioning in lessons to explore and develop pupils' understanding of scientific ideas.
- Careful planning ensures there is a good variety of learning experiences that encourage pupils to be actively involved in their learning through developing their own ideas and investigate them to determine validity.
- Imaginative and relevant activities in lessons capture pupils' interest and stimulate their curiosity. They are adept at using information and communication technology (ICT) in science with even the youngest pupils use equipment such as digital cameras to record their work.
- Pupils' science books show a good range of quality work that is well marked and mostly gives helpful advice to pupils. The 'home challenge' books make an important contribution to encouraging learning outside of lessons.
- While there is some extension work and added challenge for more able pupils, this is not consistent across the school.

Quality of the curriculum of science

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is carefully planned to deliver science in contexts that are relevant and interesting to the pupils.
- The foundation stage curriculum is developed around focused teaching and independent activities that allow pupils to explore, make predictions, investigate and report back.
- The successful thematic approach to the curriculum in Key Stage 1 is being taken forward into Key Stage 2 to extend and enhance skill development and allow for the different aspects of learning to be clearly connected. This was exemplified in one lesson by the good use of science as a context for literacy development where poems and sound were successfully brought together.
- The science curriculum has a clear emphasis on developing pupils' sense of enquiry and curiosity in the world around them.

- The environmental area currently under development provides good opportunities for extending science beyond the classroom. There are few other science extra curricular activities.
- The school regularly holds very successful parents' curriculum events where they come into school for a day with older pupils or half day with younger ones and work alongside their children. Where science is incorporated into these activities they make an important contribution to improving understanding and enjoyment.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management in science are good.

- The current temporary arrangements where science is being managed by the foundation, Key Stage 1 and 2 stage leaders are proving very successful. There is clear continuity in improvement and planning of the science curriculum. They are giving a strong lead in developing science, especially in Key Stage 2 where a thematic approach is underway.
- The new prospective co-ordinator is currently being trained and attending some successful external training courses.
- The school's effective monitoring systems give a clear view of the strengths and areas for development in science. For example systematic work scrutiny is successful in promoting greater consistency and sharing of good practice.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing a wider range more demanding and challenging opportunities in science for more able pupils
- providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in extra curricular science activities that extend and enrich the science curriculum.

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

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector