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Mrs J Russell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Russell

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Paul Scott HMI on 9 December 2008 to look at work in science.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on the range of learning experiences and the status / use of investigative 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 you and the science subject leader, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards of science

Standards are above national and local averages and achievement is good.

- Children enter the school with average attainment. By the end of Key Stage 2 they have made good progress in science, especially at the higher Level 5.
- Pupils are enthusiastic participants in lessons and achieve well because they enjoy their science and behave extremely well.
- Pupils make good progress through a science curriculum that is well structured and organised with a strong emphasis on investigative approaches.
- Pupils' written work in science is well presented and gives evidence of a good range of activity in science.

- The good standards and achievement are matched by very good personal development. Pupils are keen to take on extra responsibilities and work very well together both in groups and as a whole class.
- Science makes an important contribution to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to keep safe and live a healthy lifestyle.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding elements.

- Teaching is characterised by very good relationships between pupils and staff leading to exemplary behaviour. Pupils trust their teachers and know they will receive very good care.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge means some difficult abstract scientific concepts are well taught and misconceptions addressed.
- Scientific enquiry is thoroughly embedded in teaching and makes a good contribution to extending pupils' practical skills and their understanding of the more demanding parts of the science curriculum.
- In many lessons, development of thinking skills is strongly encouraged through the science teaching. Pupils are challenged to explain their ideas and suggest their own hypotheses which are then thoroughly investigated.
- Science practical skills are also strongly emphasised, for example, where pupils are encouraged to explore the uses and applications of different items of equipment.
- There are good examples of challenge and extension for more able pupils. This good practice should be more firmly embedded across the school.
- There are clear efforts by staff to promote literacy in science, and a range of writing styles for different purposes is seen in the work.
- Most lessons provide pupils with imaginative activities that capture their attention and stimulate their curiosity. This is supported by classroom displays that feature interesting questions that have been asked by pupils.
- Good use is made of questioning in lessons to explore and develop pupils understanding of scientific ideas and make them think about their own ideas.

Quality of the curriculum of science

The curriculum provided is good.

- The curriculum has a clear focus on developing pupils' sense of enquiry and curiosity in the world around them.
- Key Stage 1 science is planned around a theme based approach and the school intends to extend this to the rest of the curriculum.
- In all years the curriculum has a significant emphasis on skill development, particularly in scientific enquiry as well as literacy and numeracy.

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated into the curriculum and makes an important contribution to learning in science.
- There is no provision for extra-curricular activities in science that would enrich and extend the curriculum.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and Management of science are good.

- The science subject leader is very effective and leads the development of science well. A clear focus has been maintained on the importance of the investigative nature of science.
- Regular review ensures that the monitoring and evaluation of science provision and outcomes are effective. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
- The subject is planned thoroughly, well resourced with resources and equipment that are well managed and organised.
- Pupils' progress in science is thoroughly tracked and collated centrally through the use of teacher assessments and tests. This gives a clear picture of individual achievement and progress that can be tracked from one year to the next as they move through the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing a more consistent approach to provision for more able pupils that makes good use of existing good practice
- 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