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Mr D Roberts  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Roberts

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 14 January 2009 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 scientific enquiry 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards of science

Standards in science are well above average and achievement is outstanding.

- Pupils start school in Year 3 with attainment that is above average. They make excellent progress and reach very high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those whose first language is not English make especially good progress due to the excellent support they receive.

- There are some differences in the attainment of boys and girls, as boys reach better overall standards at the expected Level 4 and above but more girls reach the higher Level 5.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in science and they have excellent attitudes to learning. As a result of a strong emphasis on investigative science pupils develop very good experimental skills and are keen participants in lessons, approaching their work with obvious enthusiasm.
- Pupils produce a very good standard of written work that shows a range of different activities and covers all aspects of the science curriculum.
- Science is valued for the important contribution it makes to pupils' learning and thinking skill development both in lessons and outside of the classroom.

### Quality of teaching and learning of science

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

- Teachers' relationships with pupils are excellent with high levels of trust and mutual respect that produce a very positive learning environment.
- Investigative science is at the heart of science teaching in the school. Teachers have a clear grasp of the issues associated with teaching science in a way that includes appropriate skill development in scientific enquiry.
- Progress in science is assessed by the teachers using materials that probe intensively into knowledge and understanding in order to gain a very clear view of the progress made by each pupil and the level they have reached.
- Pupils are also encouraged to assess their own work and that of their peers. They then use the outcomes of these assessments to refine and improve their work.
- Teachers are skilled in using questioning in lessons to explore and develop pupils understanding of scientific ideas.
- Teaching and learning proceeds at a swift pace pushed on by the regular use of electronic timers that keep everyone on task.
- Thorough planning ensures there is a good variety of learning experiences that encourage pupils to be actively involved. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils and clearly underpin practical work.
- Learning is well supported by skilled and experienced teaching assistants who are valued members of the teaching teams.

### Quality of the curriculum of science

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) science schemes form the basis of the science curriculum. These are carefully adapted to pupils' needs and to deliver science in contexts that are relevant and

interesting to the pupils. Sometimes the higher level, more abstract concepts of science, are not sufficiently highlighted and explained in the planning.

- There is comprehensive planning for investigative science that ensures good development of skills.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is thoroughly embedded in the curriculum and everyday classroom practice and well used by both teachers and pupils.
- There is very good incorporation of literacy and numeracy into science based work.
- The school provides very good opportunities for extending different aspects of science through outside visits and other activities such as a visiting scientist who is the school's Science and Engineering Ambassador.

### Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management in science are outstanding.

- The science coordinator is very effective in leading the development of science. 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 and give a clear view of the strengths and areas for development in science.
- Science is thoroughly planned and resourced with well organised and well managed equipment.
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and collated centrally to give a good overview of individual achievement and progress that can be tracked from one year to the next as pupils move through the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the achievement of more able boys so that it matches that of the girls
- making sure any scientific misconceptions are clearly addressed by teachers.

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