

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



24 February 2009

Mr K McDermott
Headteacher
Leysland High School
Winchester Road
Countesthorpe
Leicester
LE8 5PR

Dear Mr McDermott

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12-13 February 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 transition within and between phases, the range of learning experiences provided; the status and use of scientific enquiry and how science works.

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 students' work and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Standards overall are significantly above the national average. Achievement is outstanding.

- In 2007, the last year for which validated data are available, test results showed students' attainment to be significantly above the national average.
- The progress made by students is outstanding. National data show that students' performance in science has been significantly above national standards each year since 2003.

- In 2008 over one quarter of students achieved Level 7 or above and the proportion attaining Level 6 or above rose by 5% to 59% compared with the previous year.
- Staff have very high expectations of students and provide a very positive environment for learning, well resourced and engaging.
- Science is organised in such a way as to build students' capacity to work in scientific ways and to promote very positive attitudes. The work in science is interesting and relevant; teaching is of high quality and these factors have contributed significantly to the success of students.
- In every lesson observed students are applying themselves very well. They collaborate very effectively, act responsibly, support each other well and enjoy what they are doing. These characteristics support the judgment that personal development is outstanding.
- Students give very good answers to demanding questions. They work with confidence and are keen to express their views. They are being well prepared for continuing education.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

Teaching and learning are outstanding.

- Teaching is of a consistently very high standard.
- Lessons are very well planned as a result of individual expertise and very effective collaboration between teachers.
- All the teaching seen was enthusiastic, skilled and stressing the need for students to be actively engaged.
- Students are experiencing very good opportunities to develop their skills and understanding of how science works.
- Students have very high opinions of the teaching they receive and judge that it is outstanding. They value their teachers' enthusiasm, expertise, approachability and good humour.
- Teachers know their students well and use assessment effectively to monitor and track the progress made by students.
- Assessment for learning techniques are seen to be deployed effectively to engage students and check their understanding.
- Self-assessment and peer assessment are developing well and are improving students' understanding of their own performance.
- Teachers' use of the information and communication technology available is exemplary. Students show a very positive attitude towards its use.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum provided is outstanding.

- It is very evident that at the heart of the curriculum is a priority for students to experience and develop their skills in how science works.
- Students are engaged in a wide range of activities and they appreciate the variety greatly.
- The scheme of work is arrived at through collaboration between teachers and ensures science is taught in relevant and interesting contexts.

- Work is well targeted at the needs and abilities of students. Each year the groupings for students are considered so that they provide the best setting for effective learning.
- While there is currently no extra-curricular science there is good enrichment of science through a combination of trips out of school and guests coming into school for specific events.
- There are good strategies for developing skills including literacy, where specific targets are set for students and teachers ensure scientific and other vocabulary is secure.

Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are outstanding.

- The very high standards and achievement of students owe much to outstanding leadership and management.
- There is a very thorough and robust system for reviewing science and the performance of staff and students. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate.
- The science team is very strong and consists of talented teachers who work together in exemplary ways. They share both vision and values associated with outstanding science education.
- Good practice is effectively shared. No team member assumes things cannot be improved and all strive for the very best.
- Performance data is used very well to analyse progress, to generate targets and to enable the tracking of individual students.
- Communication in the department is very effective and is supported by good quality documentation, much of which is informed by the good collaboration of colleagues.

Areas for improvement:

- there are no significant areas for improvement.

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

Ian Richardson
Her Majesty's Inspector