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Ms A Padden  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Padden

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 April 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; the status and use of SC1.

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 parts of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards are above the national average. Achievement is good.

- Pupils enter the school with attainment well below the national average but by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008 their attainment in science was above the national average.
- Considerable improvements have been made over the last three years, with the achievement of pupils in science putting the school in the top 45% in 2008 compared with being in the bottom 15% in 2006.
- There are no groups of pupils showing achievement below their expected level and many are achieving above expectations.
- Standards of work seen in class and in a scrutiny of books are above those expected for the age of pupils. In class pupils work with

increasing confidence and are very willing to take their part in class activities.

- There is an appropriate focus on the development of literacy in science and pupils are often using scientific terms accurately and having their understanding refined through their science work.
- Pupils show good personal development through their very good behaviour and ability to act responsibly and collaborate effectively.

### Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

- Teaching is good with some features being outstanding.
- Lessons are well-planned and provide activities well suited to the needs of all pupils. The work is engaging and pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to display information, stimulate interest and to capture pupils' thoughts and data. Pupils use ICT with confidence.
- Pupils show good levels of application and their ability to work independently is developing well through the opportunities provided by teachers.
- Assessment procedures are being refined to incorporate end of topic testing and teacher assessments in a consistent and well monitored way.
- Teachers show good skills of questioning which they use for a range of purposes, to elicit ideas from pupils, to check their understanding and to keep pupils engaged.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils seen across the full age range creating a positive environment for learning.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum provided is good.

- Formerly science was taught in separate blocks of time throughout the year. Effective self-evaluation by the senior leadership showed this arrangement to be hindering progress in raising standards in science.
- The curriculum is now organised so that all pupils other than those in Year 6 do an afternoon session of science each week. Year 6 pupils have science in a morning. The more frequent and coherent engagement of pupils in science is promoting the development of their science skills, knowledge and understanding well and the impact is evidenced by significant improvements in test outcomes in 2008.
- At the same time as making timetable changes you produced a long-term plan for the teaching of science that ensures provision fully meets National Curriculum requirements.
- Pupils are experiencing a wide range of science activities that have at their heart engagement in scientific enquiry and investigation. They have good enrichment activities such as fieldwork and residential experiences.

## Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- The senior leadership has carried out a thorough analysis of needs and planned rationally and effectively for improvements.
- There is a clear management strategy for raising attainment for the period 2007-2009 that is detailed and well matched to the analysis of need.
- Staff are well supported by the senior leadership and science co-ordinator.
- The day-to-day running of science is good and significant developments, including the improvement plan, are being well managed.
- The co-ordinator carries out her management role well, monitoring planning on a half-termly basis and carrying out book scrutinies termly.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- implementing an assessment strategy to bring about greater consistency in the way teachers' assessment is carried out and informs the evaluation of pupils' progress
- providing further professional development opportunities for developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of science including the role of scientific investigation (SC1) in promoting effective learning.

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