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Miss C Meek
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Meek

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 June 2009 to look at work in 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 yourself, the subject leader for science, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of four part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in science is good and standards are well above average.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been consistently well above average over the past five years. Children made good progress in the lessons observed. The school's tracking records also shows they make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy science lessons which are shared with Year 1 pupils. The children in Reception have good opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding through play within the classroom but opportunities to learn through outdoor play are still at a relatively early stage of development.
- There are few pupils with learning difficulties but these pupils make equal progress to that of their peers because of the support they receive in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- All the lessons observed emphasised the investigative skills of science. Pupils enjoyed their lessons. Lessons were consistently well planned and organised and pupils' learning was enhanced by the teachers' clear objectives for what they wanted pupils to learn. Work was differentiated for pupils of different abilities and less able pupils were well supported by teaching assistants and parent helpers.
- Despite the children's good progress, even more could be expected of them in the development of their science skills by way of their greater involvement in planning, organising and conducting investigations.

Quality of the science curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum is good.

- The science curriculum meets the requirements of the Programmes of Study and is firmly based on developing the investigative skills of science through experimentation.
- The school makes appropriate use of the local environment to enhance learning in science through visits and study trips and it has plans to further develop its extensive site, including better outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some after-school clubs, such as the nature club, have a leaning towards science.
- The school has made a start on developing the curriculum to link subjects together in a way that makes learning core skills more meaningful to the pupils. It is considering using the curriculum time freed up by teaching core skills through other subjects to allow more extended work in science-and humanities-led projects.

Leadership and management of science

The leadership and management of science are good.

- You provide a good oversight of performance in science and monitor the progress of pupils well, regularly discussing the progress of the pupils with their teachers.
- The science subject leader is well qualified in science and provides effective support for science with other members of staff. The staff work well as a team and have a consistent approach to the teaching of science.
- Although science is not a priority for the school's development plans, you acknowledge that it could be a vehicle to raise expectations of what pupils achieve, especially for the more able pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing flexibility in the science curriculum to provide more time for extended investigations

- improving the personal development of pupils, particularly of the more able, by giving them more responsibility in setting up, conducting and reporting investigations
- developing the science curriculum to further reflect the distinctive characteristics of the local area.

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

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector