

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



23 March 2010

Miss E Gibson
Headteacher
Stanton Road Primary School
Stanton Road
Bebington
Wirral
CH63 3HW

Dear Miss Gibson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 October 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 staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of parts of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Standards are above average. From broadly average starting points pupils make good progress in science.
- The proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected level by the end of Key Stage 2 is typically above average. In 2009, slightly fewer pupils achieved the higher level 5 than in previous years, but this was related to the lower ability of the pupils.
- In lessons pupils learn effectively and achieve well.

- Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils undertake a range of activities including investigations. Work is generally of a good standard although sometimes presentation is a little untidy.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In lessons they behave well, take responsibility for their work and collaborate effectively with others.

Quality of teaching of science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- In the lessons observed teaching was consistently good.
- Teachers are careful in their planning to take account of the different ages and abilities in their classes.
- Teachers also identify 'targeted' pupils, for example those who may need extra support or those who may be almost ready to move up to the next level or group.
- Teachers emphasise the use of appropriate scientific terminology in their lessons, which promotes the development of scientific literacy.
- Effective use is made of electronic whiteboards to enhance learning, although little use of interactive features was observed.
- Occasionally groups of pupils are set work to do and left for quite long periods without direct supervision from the teacher. However, despite occasional inattention, even younger pupils persisted with their tasks through to completion.
- In minority of lessons, the introductory teacher exposition and question and answer sessions were overlong.
- Teachers' explanations are clear.
- Practical sessions are managed very well and promote good personal development.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to individuals and groups.
- Pupils, especially older pupils, know the levels they are aiming for.
- Some appropriate use is made of concept maps to identify what pupils know at the start of a topic. Pupils revisit these later to check and reinforce what has been learned.
- There are regular assessments at the end of topics and all assessment information is collated by the subject coordinator.

- Marking makes appropriate use of praise but teachers do not always give enough guidance about how work could be improved.

Quality of the science curriculum

The curriculum for science is good.

- Pupils are enthusiastic about science and, in discussion, could recall a range of investigations they had carried out.
- The local authority scheme of work puts a strong emphasis on the skills of scientific investigation. It is well designed to enable teachers to select activities suitable for different ages and abilities and for use in mixed-year-group classes. Teachers make good use of the scheme, with adaptations to ensure it meets the needs of their pupils.
- There are some very good enrichment opportunities, such as the Year 5 science club at a local high school, which received positive feedback from pupils.
- Good use is made of hands-on approaches to support particular groups. For example, when a weakness was identified in certain pupils' understanding of plants, a gardening club was established as a means to engage their interest and develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their understanding of scientific principles through the wide range of investigations undertaken.
- At present the science curriculum is delivered largely through discrete lessons. This ensures that there is a strong focus on the skills of scientific enquiry. Teachers do seek opportunities to make links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, in the lessons observed, good links were made to healthy eating.

Effectiveness of leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- Curriculum planning in science for mixed-age classes is effective and ensures that both the breadth of coverage and the depth are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils.
- There is some monitoring and evaluation of science provision, for example through book scrutinies and comparisons with schemes of work. However, there are few direct observations of science lessons.
- Assessment and progress monitoring are systematically carried out. Analyses of this data are used to identify topics or groups of pupils where intervention or support is needed.

- The local authority provides support for science and the subject leader attends regular meetings. However, there is little science specific professional development for other classroom teachers.
- There is good senior leadership support for science.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the quality of feedback given to pupils when books are marked so that they are given clearer guidance about how to improve their work
- continuing to develop cross-curricular links and approaches to improve the links between science and other aspects of the 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

Ruth James
Her Majesty's Inspector