

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



24 November 2009

Mr D Angood
Headteacher
Appleton Roebuck Primary School
Main Street
Appleton Roebuck
York
YO23 7DN

Dear Mr Angood

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 November 2009 to look at work in science.

As outlined in the initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on evaluating the impact of recent initiatives and to investigate the need for future developments.

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 included: interviews with the school leadership team, staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good with some outstanding features.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Performance data show that overall achievement in the school is significantly above the national average but outcomes for science are not significantly above average.
- The value-added data for science show a decline in standards over three years. Given the small number of pupils in the school, these data are less reliable and you are able to explain the outcomes with reference to individual performance.

- There is no significant difference in the performance among different groups of pupils. Those identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are doing better in science than in mathematics and English.
- Attainment is seen to be balanced across the different parts of the science National Curriculum and science enquiry skills are developed well.
- Pupils' self-assessment in science is not fully developed and lags behind the practice seen in English and mathematics. They are acquiring knowledge and understanding of science well.
- Pupils behave very well and show themselves to be responsible with a positive attitude to learning.

Quality of teaching of science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teaching is of a consistently high standard and, in all lessons seen, teachers were enthusiastic, energetic and clearly focused on providing pupils with high-quality experiences.
- There is a clear belief that pupils should be active, participating and engaged. Teachers make science lessons enjoyable and provide a range of learning activities to meet the needs of all pupils.
- In these mixed-age classes, teachers are particularly skilful at ensuring there is appropriate challenge matched to the needs of individuals. They use questioning and answering techniques that allow them to monitor pupils' progress well and to engage them.
- Lessons are resourced very well with materials that are both stimulating and effective at engaging pupils in learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used particularly well in a range of ways.
- Planning is thorough and the two-year planning cycle allows pupils full access to the science National Curriculum. Teachers are empowered to be innovative and creative. Thus, individual teachers plan effectively for the needs of individual pupils.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The curriculum for science is good.

- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum in science. It is clearly based on pupils working as scientists carrying out investigations and applying science skills.
- Much of the science activities are centred on first-hand experiences that are relevant to the lives of pupils.
- Curriculum enrichment is good with visitors from a range of scientific contexts, such as health workers. The extra-curricular activities of gardening and cooking clubs extend the experiences of pupils effectively.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

Leadership and management of science are outstanding.

- You are providing teachers with high-quality guidance and advice and have been very effective in creating a confident and collaborative team of teachers.
- Although science has not been a principal focus for development over recent years, you have continued to develop the culture of enquiry in science teaching.
- You have evaluated the needs of teachers and provided appropriate opportunities for continuing professional development to support them. Teachers have high regard for your leadership and management.
- You have demonstrated a close knowledge and understanding of the progress being made by individual pupils. The details of progress made need evaluating and recording on a more frequent basis.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing self- and peer-assessment in science
- measuring pupils' progress in science more frequently and in a systematic way.

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