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Ms S Bergson  
Headteacher  
Redlands Primary School  
Lydford Road  
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Dear Ms Bergson

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 November 2009 to look at work in science.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on tracking the impact of recent initiatives and investigating 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 staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Pupils' achievements are good and standards in science are above recent national averages.
- Pupils' attainment in science at Key Stage 1 has been at national averages or slightly above for the past few years.
- At Key Stage 2, attainment has improved over four years and has been above national averages for five. In 2009, 96% of the pupils attained Level 4 or better and around two thirds attained Level 5.

- Of particular note is the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English.
- Overall progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is good. Value-added data put the school in the top third of similar schools. In 2009, 60% of the pupils in Year 6 made 18 points of progress from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The pupils work well in their science lessons and clearly enjoy the emphasis that is put on investigations. Their behaviour is good and they cooperate well with each other. A constructive but supportive working atmosphere in lessons helps to foster a cheerful and positive approach to learning.

### Quality of teaching in science

Teaching in science is good.

- Teaching is good and the teachers are confident and well-prepared. Science lessons are clearly inclusive and are planned successfully to engage the full range of pupils' ability and confidence.
- Investigations are a prominent part of the way science is taught in the school. This is especially noticeable in Key Stage 1 where the investigations are linked carefully to the day-to-day lives of the pupils.
- At Key Stage 2, the investigations are challenging and successfully help the pupils to understand and explain appropriate scientific concepts.
- Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to introduce their lessons, to illustrate concepts and give attractive examples. However, the school has some data-logging equipment and an ICT suite, but their use is not yet fully integrated into science lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide high levels of support and encouragement, not just to those with specific special educational needs and/or disabilities, but to other groups as well. Teaching assistants are well-qualified and experienced.
- Some starter activities go on for too long and the pupils fidget a little. In addition, in a minority of lessons, some learning outcomes are not clearly thought through and some pupils are unsure as to how to proceed.
- Assessment is a key strength of the science provision. Tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress is comprehensive and informative. Assessing Pupil Progress is being developed in line with national guidelines.
- Marking is carried out well and pupils' work usually contains helpful, colour-coded comments and encouragement.

## Quality of the science curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum is good.

- The science curriculum is planned and implemented well to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study.
- The emphasis on investigations and practical work is successfully embedded in the curriculum and also means that the full range of pupils' abilities are included in science activities.
- Schemes of work in science are thorough. The science provision is part of the focus for development in 2010/11 and the science coordinator has embarked on an extensive revision with more skills focus.
- Teachers' short-term planning is good and shows imagination and flair in translating the schemes of work into interesting and challenging activities.
- Enrichment is good. The school is situated in a built-up area, has very little open space except for an asphalt playground and has to find local open spaces for the pupils to get experience of activities related to ecology and conservation. In addition, there is a good variety of enrichment activities and trips.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

Leadership and management in science are good with some outstanding characteristics.

- Science is led and developed well in this school. The subject is supported very effectively by senior managers whose assessment of the provision is both accurate and highly evaluative.
- The science coordinator is a well-qualified specialist who leads the development of the provision with skill and enthusiasm. She is supported well in her role by senior managers and is currently attending some local authority professional development aimed at science coordinators.
- Other teaching staff have been supported in teaching science by internal training sessions. Little external science training has taken place for teachers over the past few years.
- Specialist resources for science are good and include digital microscopes and cameras. Health and safety is promoted well in practical work.
- Teaching assistants are well-qualified and experienced and are deployed effectively to support the pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing more ICT activities for pupils in science lessons
- providing more external opportunities for science-specific training for teachers
- completing the new schemes of work for science.

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

Alex Falconer  
Her Majesty's Inspector