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Mrs J Massen  
Headteacher  
Woodcock's Well CofE Primary  
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Dear Mrs Massen

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils during my visit on 15 January 2010 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Standards are above average and show an improving trend. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in science at the end of Key Stage 2 rose to well above average in 2009.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in science lessons. They enjoy learning and apply themselves diligently. They engage enthusiastically in the activities and investigations arranged for them by teachers.
- Attitudes to science are very good. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about investigations they had undertaken and what they had learned.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they undertake a broad range of science activities including investigations. Work seen was generally of a good standard.

- Pupils' behaviour is very good. Good cooperative working was observed in lessons. Teachers are skilful at helping pupils to develop independence and self-confidence through science activities.

#### Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. They are enthusiastic, encouraging and supportive and create a very good climate for learning in their classrooms.
- In the lessons observed teaching was consistently good. Teachers plan interesting activities, which are adapted to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities.
- Teachers' explanations are clear and they take care to use and explain scientific terms. However, some variation was seen in pupils' use of scientific vocabulary.
- In lessons, there is an appropriate balance of teacher-led exposition and question and answer, and hands-on exploratory and investigative activities. This promotes enjoyment and enables effective learning.
- Some appropriate use of information and communication technology to support learning was observed. For example, younger pupils used a simple computer quiz about materials which reinforced what they had been learning.
- During group activities, teachers monitor pupils carefully and they are adept at intervening when appropriate to ensure that pupils remain focused on their tasks. They also ask questions to encourage thinking and so move pupils' learning on.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to groups and individuals.
- Regular assessments are carried out, and these make good use of teacher observations during lessons. However, little use of self- or peer-assessment was observed.
- Marking makes appropriate use of praise but teachers do not always give enough guidance about how work could be improved.

#### Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is 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. Plans are reviewed regularly, when the class structure changes, to ensure that all pupils receive full coverage of the National Curriculum.
- A very good range of enrichment activities is offered. This includes visits, a local science club, and activities which make good use of the local environment. The school has received the silver Eco award.

- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of scientific enquiry through the wide range of investigations undertaken.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in science is good.

- You have been successful in raising the profile of science in the school and improving achievement.
- Pupils' progress is tracked and monitored to give a good overview of achievement and progress that can be monitored from one year to the next as pupils move through the school.
- The school makes very good use of local partnerships which contribute well to pupils' learning.
- The science coordinator has made good use of question-level analysis of pupils' answers on test papers to help identify their misconceptions and ensure that these are tackled in the future.
- Effective teamwork among teachers ensures that their different skills are used well in planning, particularly as the school moves towards a more topic-based curriculum.
- The science coordinator has had appropriate training from the local authority to support her in her role.
- Monitoring of the quality of science is carried out mainly through lesson observations by you, and work scrutiny. There are plans to further develop the monitoring role of the coordinator, as far as resources in this small school allow.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing further teaching and learning strategies to promote the understanding and use of scientific vocabulary
- continuing to develop and refine assessment strategies to involve pupils more in assessment of their work, and ensure that they understand how to improve.

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