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Ms C Hodgson  
Headteacher  
Nunnys Kirk Centre for Dyslexia  
Netherwitton  
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Northumberland  
NE61 4PB

Dear Ms Hodgson

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 8 and 9 February 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 lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Your school covers a wide age range of pupils from Year 5 to the sixth form. Pupils enter the school with attainment well below the national average. The school serves the needs of pupils who have dyslexia.
- Attainment at GCSE in science is well below the national average but individuals have been successful in achieving grade A in science. With cohorts of pupils being in single figures, the usual statistical measures for cohorts are not valid.
- Pupils make good progress. This is seen in the scrutiny of their work and in lesson observations. Assessment data systematically collected and recorded show that pupils are making good progress.
- In lessons, pupils apply themselves well, show positive attitudes to work and behave very well indeed.

- The analysis of outcomes at GCSE for 2009 shows that science is performing above the average for the school.
- Pupils are helped to overcome their difficulties with reading and writing through skilled teaching which avoids the written language being a significant barrier to learning in science.

#### Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teaching has a clear focus on the needs of individual pupils.
- Skilled use of question and answer techniques makes it possible to check pupils' understanding and the progress they are making.
- The pupils have positive relationships with their teacher who maintains good encouragement and responds positively to pupils' questions and suggestions.
- Pupils are active learners and readily participate in the good range of activities including practical work.
- The teacher uses information and communication technology effectively to engage pupils and set out tasks, challenges and explanations well.
- Teaching is lively and enthusiastic which helps to maintain the good pace of learning seen.

#### Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The schemes of work in science cover the requirements of the National Curriculum for all the key stages in the school. The science covered is broad and balanced.
- In Key Stage 4, pupils appropriately follow the legal minimum requirement of a single core science course at GCSE. This allows pupils to cover the content in more than average time.
- While much of the science taught uses contexts familiar and relevant to pupils, the school is yet to develop greater enhancement of the pupils' science experiences.
- The curriculum is matched well to the needs of pupils.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

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

- The subject teacher in science monitors the performance of pupils systematically. The performance data collected allow the teacher to set targets and check progress.

- Good planning ensures that individuals are engaged in science work relevant to their needs. The planning is detailed and thorough.
- The subject teacher is looking at ways of measuring progress through the calculation of value added on an individual pupil basis.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing enrichment for science learning across the age range
- ensuring that pupils understand the progress they are making.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop science in the school.

As I explained previously, 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