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12 July 2012

Mrs D Barrett
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Barrett

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 2 July 2012 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 without their consent.

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

The overall effectiveness of science is satisfactory.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is satisfactory.

- Pupils make satisfactory or better progress in lessons, although inaccurate Key Stage 1 assessment data from previous years means that it is difficult to assess progress over longer periods of time. The Key Stage 2 cohorts are very small and although attainment is broadly above average, there is considerable variation between individuals and from year to year. The very few pupils of dual heritage and those with special educational needs make at least as much, and in some cases more progress than their peers.
- Pupils are able to use their scientific knowledge and understanding to give explanations and solve problems. In the lessons observed more able pupils were not always fully challenged, for example by being provided with open-ended tasks.

- Pupils demonstrate a keen interest in science especially when the curriculum is enhanced through visits, or work away from the school site and when visitors come to the school. They are able to work independently given guidance from the teacher, but are not routinely developing their own questions to scientific problems.
- The school has focused its efforts on raising attainment in English and mathematics. Strategies to improve achievement in these areas, including effective target setting, are supporting improvements but are at an early stage of implementation in science.
- Older pupils do not know the levels that they are working to in science, or have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use a range of resources and teaching strategies, including practical work and information and communication technology to generate interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils take an active part in lessons and enjoy their work. Targeted questioning is used effectively to extend thinking and develop skills, especially at Key Stage 1.
- Activities are not always tightly linked to learning objectives, and it is not consistently clear in lessons what pupils need to do to move from one level to the next. The two lessons observed did not always provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, resulting in satisfactory, rather than good, pupil progress.
- Assessment through testing and teacher assessment is carried out twice a year for pupils in Key Stage 2 and once for Key Stage 1. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses extremely well, and put this information to good use as they support individuals in lessons.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly with teachers making good use of praise.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is satisfactory.

- From pupils' work it is evident that day-to-day planning takes into account the need to ensure progression in skills and knowledge. This is a particular challenge, particularly for older pupils, with only one class for each key stage. Schemes of work do not make explicit how teaching will develop scientific knowledge and understanding systematically as pupils progress through the school.
- Pupils' work shows that a good range of science activities has been undertaken. Teachers regularly provide opportunities to develop skills of scientific enquiry. A wide range of stimulating and interesting extra-curricular activities is provided, with many visitors and trips. Older gifted

and talented pupils particularly enjoyed a recent science visit to a local secondary school.

- Opportunities to develop mathematical and literacy skills are evident within pupils' work but not explicit or carefully planned within the schemes of work.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

The effectiveness of leadership and management in science is satisfactory.

- The recent focus on literacy and numeracy has been driven by the need to improve pupil progress in these areas. Achievement in science is not a cause for concern. As a result very little science-specific professional development has taken place recently, although generic training for improving teaching and learning has had a positive impact in science.
- Pupils' achievement is assessed regularly and leaders have a clear view of progress and overall attainment in science.
- The day-to-day monitoring of science occurs via staff discussion but there is currently no moderation of assessments with other local schools or the local authority. At present, no effective links to support teachers' subject knowledge exist with local schools, but some activities have been provided for gifted and talented pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of planning to ensure that pupils' science skills and understanding are developed systematically as they progress through the school
- maximising the rate of progress for all pupils by ensuring that the activities provided in lessons are tightly linked to learning objectives and that pupils know how to improve and move from one level to the next.

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

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Mary Massey
Her Majesty's Inspector