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25 January 2008

Mrs E Tildesley
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Dear Mrs Tildesley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 January 2008 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with yourself, the subject leader for science, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in science is good and standards are high.

- In the most recent end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2007 all pupils reached Level 4 (the national expectation). Sixty per cent of pupils achieved Level 5, which is an above average proportion of pupils reaching the highest level.
- By Year 6, pupils' investigative skills are of a high order. Pupils play a major role in setting up their investigations and have a clear understanding of what makes for a fair test, replicable by others.
- Science is a strong contributor to pupils' personal development. For example, through science, pupils learn concern for the environment. They behave responsibly when they undertake investigations. Their attainment and interest in science prepares them well should they wish to make science a career in the future.

- Children in the Foundation Stage have a keen interest in the world around them. Their first year in school prepares them very well for learning about science in later years.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good. Some lessons are of outstanding quality.

- Several of the teachers have advanced qualifications in science. Subject knowledge of science, therefore, is very good.
- Science is taught largely through enquiry and lessons are aimed at making science enjoyable for pupils with lots of practical work.
- Teachers have a thoroughly up-to-date approach to teaching in science lessons; they make very good use of modern technology, including full use of interactive whiteboards and internet sources. They employ modern teaching techniques in lessons, such as the greater involvement of pupils in assessing their progress.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum is good.

- The school uses a commercial scheme of work for science that has been thoroughly evaluated by the subject leader. The scheme is also used to provide a secure framework of assessments by which teachers plot pupils' progress in their knowledge and understanding.
- Clear links between science and the other subjects of the curriculum are made in order that pupils can see how learning in one subject has a bearing on other subjects and aspects.
- Science is the basis of several enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management of science

The leadership and management of science are good.

- The subject leader provides excellent direction for science. She ensures that the approach to science is through enquiry and by teachers challenging pupils' thinking about the world, and also that pupils enjoy their science.
- Networking with science subject leaders in other schools and cohesive working arrangements within the school ensure good communication about science, including the spreading of new ideas.
- Transition between key stages is well managed, including the transition to secondary school.
- You ensure that the school's performance in science at the end of each key stage is carefully monitored. With the science subject leader, you have plans to develop the tracking of progress within science in each key stage to aid early identification of slower than expected progress by individual pupils. This work is at an early stage of development.

Inclusion

The school's arrangements to promote inclusion through science are good.

- Teachers' planning is differentiated to match pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding. There are teaching assistants in each class. They often work with lower ability pupils in science rather than in say, physical education lessons, in order to help them to record their work in science.
- The school has a good track record in enabling children of all abilities to achieve well in science. In 2007, all pupils reached the national expectation (Level 4).
- Because so much of the science is of a practical nature, pupils who do not excel in literacy and numeracy, for example, often excel in science.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- closer tracking of progress in science, including the progress of different groups and in pupils' investigative skills.

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

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector