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Mrs D Dix
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dix

## 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 20 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.

- Children have a positive start to their science education in the Early Years Foundation Stage making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average but fluctuate from year to year. This is due to the small numbers of pupils in each year group and the larger than average number of pupils who join the school during Years 3 to 6.
- In lessons, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas and in their acquisition of the skills of scientific enquiry.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers due to the good support they receive in lessons from teaching assistants.
- Pupils enjoy science, particularly when they are given the opportunity to design and carry out their own experiments.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour was at least good in all the lessons observed.

## Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Lessons are planned well and structured around clear learning outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning at the start of lessons to check pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas so that the lesson can build on their previous learning.
- Lessons contain interesting activities that actively engage pupils in learning.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and this actively encourages their good attitudes to learning.
- Most books are marked well and give helpful advice to pupils about how to improve their work or move to the next level in science. However, this is not consistently the case.

## Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- The curriculum has a clear focus on developing pupils' interest in science by encouraging them to ask questions about the world around them.
- The science curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements and science topics are well ordered to ensure continuity in pupils' learning.
- The development of pupils' skills of scientific enquiry plays a central role in the school's curriculum.
- The curriculum contains a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons but greater use needs to be made of data-logging equipment.
- The science curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is well linked to learning in other subjects. The school has rightly identified the need to further develop links with other subjects in Years 3 to 6.
- A broad range of trips and activities, including effective use of the school environment, enhances pupils' learning and enjoyment of science.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

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

- Due to staffing changes, the school has had three science coordinators in the last 18 months. You have maintained continuity in the leadership and management of science during this period.
- Pupils are set challenging targets in science and their progress towards these targets is regularly monitored.
- The quality of science teaching has been monitored in the past but not during the last year. The recently appointed science coordinator has plans to re-establish the monitoring of teaching.
- The science development plan accurately identifies and tackles the areas in need of improvement. However, the process of monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of actions are not clearly identified in this plan.

## Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all marking and feedback to pupils give them clear guidance about how to improve their work
- further developing curriculum links with other subjects in Years 3 to 6
- ensuring the science development plan clearly identifies how the actions in the plan and their impact will be monitored and evaluated.

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

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector