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Mrs R Bagni
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bagni

Ofsted survey inspection programme – science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 25 June 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 staff and discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and Standards

Standards in science are below average but achievement is satisfactory.

- Standards are below average and have been so for several years. However, in relation to their starting points, children's achievement in science is satisfactory. Better progress is made in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1.
- Children have a good attitude towards science. They are curious about the world about them and keen to find out about it. They enjoy practical work most, but they are also interested in science-related facts and explanations. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to their science lessons at secondary school.
- Every Child Matters outcomes are satisfactory. Children are learning about healthy eating, for example, through science, but the lack of emphasis on enquiry and investigation in lessons is limiting progress in

building the fundamental science thinking skills that children will need for the future.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory.

- The quality of lessons is inconsistent. Good teaching and inadequate teaching were observed. Good teaching in science was underpinned by strong, generic teaching skills as well as good subject knowledge. The inadequate teaching showed a lack of both.
- Children's learning is satisfactory and generally work is reasonably presented. Their exercise books show that those of different abilities have work that is matched to their levels of knowledge and understanding, except where teaching is inadequate.
- The school has a well developed assessment system and teachers know the levels at which children are working. Better teaching makes good use of this information in the planning stage of lessons.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum is inadequate.

- The science curriculum is too focused on children learning facts about science at the expense of promoting the fundamental skills of enquiry and investigation.
- From a scrutiny of children's work, too little science is undertaken in some classes and does not add up to the ten percent of time that it is allocated in principle.
- The science curriculum has not been reviewed for several years. It is due for review over the next two years and you, together with the temporary co-ordinator for science, have good ideas for future developments.
- Good links with other subjects, especially English, are established within science lessons.
- The school has an after-school environment club, which is science-based.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management of science are inadequate.

- There are powerful contextual factors that explain the inadequacy with which science has been led and managed in recent years.
- The post of co-ordinator has been effectively unfilled for two years or more because of staffing difficulties that have only recently been resolved. Significant development of science has been in abeyance, although the temporary co-ordinator has monitored planning, has an

overview of standards, and has promoted the use of cross-curricular links within science lessons.

- Raising standards in science has not been a priority for the school in recent years. The school has focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. It is also meeting other significant challenges, such as preparing to move site, and meeting the needs of its established Bangladeshi community and the growing population of Polish immigrant families.

Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is good.

- The school has one of the highest proportions of children from minority ethnic backgrounds within Cheshire. Children of different ethnic backgrounds work together in harmony.
- The school has a very welcoming ethos, where all children are cared for and valued.
- Each class has a teaching assistant. Generally they work with teachers to ensure that all children, especially the more vulnerable and those with learning difficulties, play a full part in science lessons.
- Although support for children with English as an additional language was not observed, Edleston is a designated 'hub' school for children with English as an additional language (EAL) and employs an EAL manager to provide support the arrival of Polish families into the area.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed:

- increasing the opportunities children have to learn science through enquiry and investigation
- eradicating the inadequate aspects of teaching and learning and making sure all lessons are consistently good
- tailoring the science curriculum to be more relevant to children's needs and interests and to better reflect the school's community and location.

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. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector