

The Primary Science Teaching Trust's initial response to Ofsted's science subject report

Ofsted's recent research and analysis publication, 'Finding the optimum: the science subject report', provides helpful guidance for the sector. We are pleased to see the recommendations that substantial curriculum time for science is needed and that it should be taught regularly, rather than in blocks. Another positive aspect of the report is the recognition of the importance of providing children with a more connected learning experience in science, and that secondary school curricula should build on what has been learned in primary schools.

We also welcome Ofsted's view that children should be explicitly taught disciplinary knowledge and how to work scientifically, although we would not wish to see this result in highly prescriptive practical work where children's sense of purpose and their agency are reduced. We hope that the recommendations will not limit teachers with planning creatively for science lessons that are responsive to children's needs and interests, nurture their curiosity, and help them build an identity with science. In early years, we would have liked Ofsted to recognise that experiential science activities where substantive knowledge may not be made explicit are, in their own right, valuable foundations for future learning in science.

We endorse the finding that teachers should have access to high quality and regular professional development, particularly where science is not a specialism, and that in their initial teacher education phase, student teachers should be supported to develop their knowledge of science and how to teach it. We appreciate Ofsted's acknowledgement that support from external organisations can give schools a strong starting point in science, and in due course we will be mapping our current offer of professional development and resources for teachers to the recommendations outlined in the report.

February 2023