

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



23 November 2010

Miss T Cotter
Headteacher
St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary
School
Dimbles Hill
Lichfield
WS13 7NH

Dear Miss Cotter

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 10 November 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements include: interviews with staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation including the school's own data relating to pupils' attainment and progress; analysis of pupils' work; and the observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is satisfactory.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is satisfactory.

- Progress in science is improving reflecting the good learning seen in the large majority of lessons and the steady increase in attainment. Historically, progress has been variable between classes particularly at Key Stage 2, due in part to staffing changes. As a result, despite recent improvements, pupils' progress overall, relative to their starting points remains broadly average.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that the pupils from minority ethnic groups can access the science curriculum and make similar progress to their peers. Successful strategies have included ensuring resources feature subject-specific vocabulary in heritage languages and by establishing very

strong links with the community to provide in-school bilingual support for learners.

- The vast majority of children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world during their time in the Reception class because provision is planned carefully to meet their individual needs.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their science and are keen and enthusiastic in lessons and are willing to share their ideas when questioned. For example, pupils in Year 3 talked animatedly about their investigation to find out which drinks were most harmful to their teeth, explaining the steps they were taking to ensure that the test was fair.
- Pupils in all year groups are able to follow instructions and demonstrate the ability to work independently with confidence when carrying out investigations. They are able to use their previous knowledge to predict the results of their investigations. However, they are less confident when asked to use their scientific knowledge to explain their predictions.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Teachers have developed secure subject knowledge. Most notably, they have increased their confidence in teaching scientific enquiry through very effective support from the science coordinator and bespoke training provided by the local authority.
- Most teachers are planning carefully to meet the needs of different pupils. Their planning clearly identifies the intended learning noting features that would typify success. These are shared with pupils at the start of the lesson, helping them to understand what they need to do to achieve well.
- Teachers mark pupils' work well. Written feedback helps pupils to know how well they have done and provides questions or additional tasks to supplement or extend their learning. Pupils are given the time to respond to teacher feedback and this effectively moves on their learning.
- Pupils' progress in relation to scientific enquiry is also assessed carefully with a 'skills ladder' used to highlight pupils' current level of working and support further progression.
- Teachers are making effective use of new technologies to support learning. However, the school rightly recognises that there could be more planned opportunities for pupils to improve their information and communication technology (ICT) skills through science.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- Teachers are making good use of cross-curricular links to ensure that pupils' learning is relevant and exciting. For example, an investigation was

brought to life for pupils in a Key Stage 2 class by linking it to their Second World War topic.

- Themed weeks and educational visits add to pupils' enjoyment of science and provide a good range of opportunities for problem-solving and open-ended investigations.
- The science curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils understanding of how to keep themselves safe and the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in science

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

- The subject leader has worked in close collaboration with staff to establish an aspirational vision for the teaching of science in school.
- Targets set reflect the school's expectation that pupils will achieve well and their progress is monitored carefully across all four attainment targets using a range of moderated assessments.
- The quality of provision is evaluated regularly using a robust evidence base with actions taken to tackle areas identified for development being successful in many areas.
- The science subject leader is supported well by the senior leaders and has used her involvement in a local science coordinators' network effectively to enhance good practice and the use of new resources in the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending teachers' use of ICT as a tool to support learning and to increase the opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills in a science context
- developing pupils' confidence to apply their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain their predictions and investigation findings.

I hope that 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

Katrina Gueli
Her Majesty's Inspector