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Mrs E Giltinan
Headteacher
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Giltinan

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: science

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 January 2013 to look at work in subject.

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 included: interviews with staff; talking to pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observations of science teaching in four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is outstanding.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is outstanding.

- Pupils start school in the foundation stage with attainment that is below and in some cases well below, the expected levels for their age. Pupils make excellent progress and reach high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Different groups of pupils in the school are all achieving equally well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress as they receive very good support that meets their needs. Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium make excellent progress with all of them reaching the expected level 4 or better.
- As a result of a strong emphasis on investigative science, pupils develop good experimental skills and are keen participants in lessons, approaching their work with obvious enthusiasm. Behaviour is exemplary.

- Science is valued for the important contribution it makes to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to find out things for themselves and get involved in practical activities.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is outstanding.

- Teachers' relationships with pupils are excellent with high levels of trust and mutual respect producing a very positive learning environment. Teachers are skilled in using questioning and waiting for pupils to think through their answers to encourage pupils to explore their own ideas and develop their understanding of scientific concepts.
- Lessons are planned to cover a very good range of learning experiences and different learning needs. This encourages pupils to be actively involved in their science learning.
- Assessment is used well throughout the school to support learning. The tracking systems used in literacy and numeracy are being extended to science.
- Learning is well supported by skilled and experienced teaching assistants who are valued members of the teaching team.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has an excellent focus on independent activities that allow pupils to explore, investigate and find out.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is outstanding.

- The science curriculum is visible around the school through some excellent displays of pupils' work in a very positive learning environment.
- The school has worked hard to introduce a more creative approach to their teaching that concentrates on how pupils learn. Science is successfully embedded in this approach and makes an important contribution to developing pupils' wider skills.
- The school has recently adopted an environmental based scheme to enhance pupils' social skills through taking learning out of the classroom. Science has the potential to make a considerable contribution to this approach although this is as yet underdeveloped.
- The science curriculum is considerably enhanced by enrichment activities both in the school and through external visits. The governors make an excellent contribution to this through their involvement in establishing these external links as well as delivering workshops and activities such as 'messy science' in school.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

The effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science is outstanding.

- Science is very well led with an excellent emphasis on maintaining an investigative approach to science. The subject leader has a clear vision for developing the quality of science education across the school and beyond in to the wider community.
- The monitoring and evaluation of science provision is effective and gives a clear view of the strengths and areas for development. This work has been particularly enhanced by the subject leader working through and gaining the Primary Science Quality Mark to silver level.
- Pupils' progress is monitored carefully to give a good overview of individual achievement that can be tracked as pupils move through the school.
- Continuing professional development for teachers is well-targeted at improving science teaching, especially scientific enquiry that enhances pupils' science skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the role of science in the new environmental based scheme for taking learning out of the classroom.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop science in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector