

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



8 February 2013

Mrs E Gilman
Headteacher
St Andrew's Catholic Primary School
St Andrew's Road
Portsmouth
Newspire
PO2 9AX

Dear Mrs Cohen

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 28 January 2013 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 included: interviews with staff; talking to pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observations of teaching in seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science is good.

Achievement in science

Achievement in science is good.

- Pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with standards that are in line with age related expectations. They make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 1 the standards reached are above the national average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards that are well above national averages with almost half reaching the higher Level 5.
- Different groups of pupils in the school also make good progress. Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium make very good progress and all reached the expected Level 4. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, made progress in science, although this was not as great as that made in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good in active science sessions and they have good attitudes towards their learning in science. When given the

opportunity they are keen to participate and work well both independently and in groups. They enjoy making their own decisions and raising questions as well as being actively involved in planning investigations.

- Science makes an important contribution to developing pupils' basic skills especially in mathematics and literacy. For example spellings of scientific words are regularly checked and corrected. Information and communications technology is used in science sessions and pupils use sensing devices such as light meters in their practical sessions.

Quality of teaching in science

The quality of teaching in science is good.

- Good planning in most science lessons results in activities that are interesting, engaging and relevant to pupils with a range of learning needs. This is supported by the excellent relationships between adults and pupils that produce a positive learning environment.
- Teaching places a clear emphasis on an investigative and practical approach to science as teachers understand that this is how their pupils can really learn and understand the scientific process.
- Teachers assess their pupils regularly and use the outcomes of this process to make sure future lessons meet pupils' needs.
- The regular marking of pupils' work recognises success and often gives guidance on how to improve although this is not consistent practice across all teachers. Pupils are not always clear about the standard of their work and the targets they are aiming at.

Quality of the curriculum in science

The quality of the curriculum in science is good.

- Science is delivered as a stand-alone subject with a strong emphasis on cross curricular links with other subjects. In particular links with Jewish studies are strong and pupils can identify the areas of science they have studied in this area. Literacy and numeracy are embedded in the science teaching and make a strong contribution to developing pupils' basic skills.
- Good displays of pupils' work in classes around the school make an important contribution to the science curriculum and recognise pupils' achievements.
- Curriculum planning for science gives appropriate priority to practical activities that help engage and enthuse pupils with their lessons. This includes giving pupils opportunities to make their own key decisions and test out their scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Science teaching copes well with the restrictions of the school building especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Here, the curriculum is developed around focused teaching and independent activities that allow pupils to explore and find out.

- The science curriculum is enhanced through many local visits and residential courses as well as in school activities such as the Gardening Club.

Effectiveness of leadership in, and management of, science

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

- The science subject leaders are well aware of their responsibilities for the quality of science education in the school. There are effective strategies for the professional development of teachers to help boost both their confidence in teaching science and their subject knowledge. The subject leaders are keen to develop their role further through becoming involved in the Primary Science Quality Mark scheme.
- Subject leaders use a range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the delivery of science across the school. This gives them a clear view of the strengths and areas for development in science. For example a recent needs audit of the staff has identified areas where additional support and training are needed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing the school's decision to work towards the primary science quality mark to enhance the subject leader's role
- reviewing the feedback given to pupils through the marking of their work so that they are given good advice on the standards they are reaching and how to improve.

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