

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mrs S O'Meally  
Headteacher  
Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School  
Gregory Avenue  
Weoley Castle  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B29 5DY

Dear Mrs O'Meally

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 March 2007 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in science are good.

- Standards are broadly average, and noticeably better than the 2006 end of Key Stage 1 and 2 results indicated. Pupils' achievement is good, also better than in 2006, with a significant minority of pupils reaching above average standards.
- Pupils' achievement is enhanced by the use of speaking, discussion and debate, which help pupils express their understanding well orally. However, while this sophistication is seen in discussion, it is less evident in writing where explanations of experimental results or knowledge and understanding are frequently very brief.

- Pupils' grasp of investigative principles is good. They understand about fair-testing, predicting, planning investigations and understand the importance of repeating experiments or taking several readings/observation to ensure experimental reliability.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. Almost all settle quickly to work quickly. The great majority behave well and have very positive attitudes. Pupils are sensible, very considerate of each other, and listen to and help each other willingly.
- Pupils know how well they are doing in science and what they need to do to improve.

### Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is seen in the level of sophisticated discussion in lessons and the enthusiasm exhibited by pupils.
- Lessons are well prepared with a wide range of activities and clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils.
- Work is well matched to pupils' needs and challenges the most able too.
- The pace of lessons is good, with teachers moving pupils on at a fast pace.
- All lessons include opportunities for pupils to discuss the work they do, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to explain in writing their understanding and knowledge. The school has recognised this.
- Teaching assistants and special needs staff support pupils with learning difficulties sensitively and effectively.
- Where teaching is outstanding, excellent relationships between teachers and pupils ensure pupils' undivided attention. The very wide range of activities for pupils, supporting demonstrations, display material and information and communication technology (ICT) engage and enthuse pupils. Pupils are challenged to explain their understanding using all of the correct scientific terminology. The pace of work is fast and extended with further ideas and reference back previous work pupils had done.
- The management of pupils is good, and is based on excellent relationships, though occasionally, pupils settle too slowly when they are working in groups.
- Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work and set targets for pupils. They mark work thoroughly giving clear indications of how well pupils perform and what they need to do to make further progress.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- National Curriculum requirements are fully covered and there are very good links with English, mathematics, drama, ICT, design technology and other subjects when appropriate.
- Work is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils.
- ICT is used well. Pupils use computers regularly and teachers use classroom computer technology well.
- Science investigations are well-planned so that pupils become familiar with the processes of investigation.
- The inclusion of numeracy activities is good. Inclusion of literacy is satisfactory, but with too few opportunities for extended writing.
- The vibrant display of science topic work in classrooms supports pupils' work.

## Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are good.

- You and your subject leader have made significant improvements.
- You provide a considerable level of support for the subject leader, enabling her to be effective in how she works with staff to bring about improvements. The direction for improvement is outstanding.
- There is a clear focus on raising standards, improving achievement and ensuring pupils enjoy science. There has been significant success since September 2006.
- Evaluation of the provision is accurate and there is a sharp focus on actions needed for further improvement. The quality of support and training for teachers to achieve these ends is good.

## Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- Work is well matched to the needs of the great majority of pupils.
- Boys' and girls' achievement is equally good, and there is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties achieve well.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall.

The areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- provide more planned opportunities for pupils to express their knowledge and understanding through independent writing.

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 and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley  
Additional Inspector