

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 March 2007

Sister Brigid
Principal
Bellerive FCJ Catholic College
Windermere Terrace
Sefton Park, Liverpool
Merseyside
L8 3SB

Dear Sister Brigid

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 March to look at work in ESD.

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 pupils, students, teachers, the school chaplain and members of the school support staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' and students' work, observation of four lessons and relevant extra-curricular activities.

The overall effectiveness of ESD was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are good overall.

- Evidence from written work from a wide range of subjects across the school indicates that pupils reach above average standards and achieve well, for example in collecting and analysing data to reach conclusions about the quality of fellow pupils' diet.
- In lessons seen, all of which had a focus on "water" as part of the school's "Science Week" programme, pupils were using research skills well to prepare for group presentations and debate in relation on issues reflecting aspects of the sustainability agenda. This worked well

in ways which developed their understanding of personal and group responsibilities towards the environment and other people.

- Pupils' personal development and well being-is outstanding. This is because the school recognises and very strongly promotes the sustainability agenda as inherently sympathetic to its aims, rooted in Christian values. This is reflected, for example, in the significant proportion of pupils prepared to take responsibility and work on behalf of others in the school and wider community. The ethos, which prevails therefore, makes a reality of the school's mission to empower pupils and encourage them to assume their rights and responsibilities as human beings.

Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

Teaching and learning are good overall.

- The school's educational philosophy reflects the principles of ESD very well. This was strongly evident in the majority of the lessons seen.
- In lessons observed in history, biology and general science, learning was made relevant to pupils' own lives, providing good opportunities for them to use research skills and ensuring that all were making effective contributions to challenging group tasks. Consequently, pupils were interested, keen to be involved and learning moved at a brisk pace.
- Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and they are involved in assessing the extent to which they are achieved.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for ESD is good.

- There is an expectation that all subject areas identify ways in which they can contribute to pupils' knowledge understanding and skills in relation to appropriate areas of the sustainability agenda.
- A good range of extension and extra-curricular activities encourage and make use of pupil's interests in aspects of the sustainability agenda. Particularly striking evidence was observed where groups of younger pupils were involved in creative tasks designing and building models of "sustainable villages".
- Because the principles which underpin sustainability are well understood and widely shared, teachers are quick to take advantage of opportunities which arise to encourage pupils to take direct action on issues which emerge from their investigations.

Leadership and management of ESD

- There is a vision for ESD which is transmitted to all members of the school community to the extent that it permeates the everyday life of the school.
- School support staff appreciate the way in which they are encouraged to take an active role in promoting sustainability, for example in ensuring that the school becomes more effective in recycling and reusing waste materials and the efficient use of energy and water.
- School managers are prepared to invest scarce financial resources now in order to improve the school's contribution to sustainability in the long term.
- Good support is provided for in-service training and the professional development of individual teachers in areas which improves their capacity to contribute to the sustainability agenda.
- Sustainability issues are seen as key criteria in determining the award of contracts, for example, for catering.
- While the sustainability agenda permeates much of the life of the school, it currently lacks coordination and procedures for evaluating its effectiveness.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The school's mission strongly reflects the Every Child Matters agenda.
- The school works assiduously and with sensitivity to ensure that vulnerable pupils achieve well and it strongly supports their personal development.
- Commitment to the provision of activities which reflect the sustainability agenda strongly promotes confidence and self-esteem in pupils which contributes to their good achievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making sure that responsibilities for the coordination of ESD are clearly identified
- ensuring that the provision for ESD is routinely evaluated through the school's monitoring procedures.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD 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

Anthony Pearson
Additional Inspector