

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs E Richards
Headteacher
St Anne's and St Joseph's R C Primary School
Sandy Lane
Accrington
Lancashire
BB5 2AN

Dear Mrs Richards

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 September 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 yourself, senior staff and children, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of five part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Standards in science are high and achievement is outstanding

- Standards at Years 2 and 6 in 2007 were high, with a large proportion of children at the end of each key stage reaching the national expectation for children of their age. Significant proportions (51% and 31% at Year 2 and Year 6) achieved the highest levels, Levels 3 and 5 respectively.
- Since most children enter school with lower than average knowledge, skills and understanding, these high standards represent outstanding achievement.
- Learning in science makes a significant, positive contribution to the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

The quality of teaching and learning in science is good.

- Teachers have a high level of generic skills, not confined to the teaching of science.
- Children make a good start to learning fundamental science skills in Reception, through experiences they encounter under the 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' area of learning.
- A great deal of attention is paid to health and safety in science lessons.
- The language of science is promoted well.
- Teachers call on lots of support during science lessons from teaching assistants and volunteer helpers. Group work is particularly effective as a consequence of the level of support in lessons. Support has a particularly positive impact on children who find learning science difficult for any reason, such as those with special educational needs and those just learning English.
- Teachers plan their science lessons carefully and mark children's work in a way that helps them understand what they have learned and what they need to do next.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the science curriculum is good.

- Learning in science lessons is linked well with learning in other subjects, such as mathematics.
- There is a close partnership with the associated secondary school, which has science and technology specialist status.
- The school is creative in its approach to the curriculum. 'Professor Molecule's Laboratory' is a good example of this. As well as providing exciting and challenging problems for children to solve, it also provides teachers with a useful opportunity to assess children's investigative skills and levels of understanding.

Leadership and management of science

The quality of leadership and management for science is outstanding

- The leadership team takes responsibility for science. The team has strength in depth. It is highly self-evaluative and committed to improvement. It has set targets for improvement in science this year based on its evaluation of last year's work.
- Expectations of management, teachers and children are very high.
- Teaching quality is monitored and there is thorough tracking of children's progress and of targets.
- The school is well resourced for science, and the resources are accessible to learners.

Inclusion

Inclusion is outstanding.

- The school is highly inclusive. All children's contributions are valued. There is support and encouragement at all levels for children vulnerable to underachievement.
- Teachers are skilled at involving all the children in their classes during science lessons, drawing out understanding through patient, skilled questioning.
- The quantity and quality of support for teachers promotes inclusion.
- Boys perform well, contrary to the national picture.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the quality of investigative science.

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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector