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Mr M Boyle  
Headteacher  
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School  
Charles Street  
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Dear Mr Boyle

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Science

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 June 2008 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 analysis of data, interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, pupils' work and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of science was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are about average.

- In 2007 at Key Stage 2, almost all pupils achieved at least level 4 in the national tests. The proportion achieving level 5 was below the national average.
- Progress is satisfactory overall.
- The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is better than that of other pupils.
- Behaviour observed in lessons was very good.

Quality of teaching and learning of science

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Teachers are encouraging and supportive and relationships with pupils are good.

- Some effective use is made of ICT in lessons.
- Teachers plan a range of activities including practical work to engage interest and promote learning.
- In the lessons observed some good use was made of 'talk partners' to encourage pupils to discuss their ideas.
- In the lessons observed the pace of learning was generally set by a teacher-led, whole class approach.
- Teachers' planning does not always take sufficient account of the need for pupils to grasp concrete examples before applying their knowledge to more abstract ideas.
- There is insufficient emphasis on the development of scientific literacy in lessons.
- The marking of pupils' work is variable. Teachers praise good work but there is little guidance to help pupils improve their work.

### Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum in science is satisfactory.

- The Foundation Stage curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of the world.
- ICT is used to enhance the curriculum in science.
- Occasional trips and visits are also used to enhance the science curriculum.
- Insufficient attention is given to investigative work and to developing scientific literacy skills.

### Leadership and management of science

Leadership and management of science are satisfactory.

- Day to day management is effective.
- Resources for science are managed effectively.
- There has been a pro-active approach to developing the use of ICT in lessons.
- There is good awareness of the need to raise standards in science by increasing the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The science action plan is focused on raising achievement but it is limited in scope and does not explicitly identify how this will be achieved.
- A tracking system is used satisfactorily to monitor progress and identify underachievers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the amount of investigative work, and encouraging pupils to devise and test their own predictions to help develop independent thinking and investigational skills in science
- ensuring that lessons are planned to promote progression from simple concrete examples before pupils are expected to think in abstract terms

- developing more differentiation strategies to ensure that teaching meets the needs of the full range of abilities and to provide more challenge for more able pupils.

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

Ruth James  
Her Majesty's Inspector