

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



23 November 2010

Mr N Jones
Headteacher
Abercrombie Primary School
Higher Albert Street
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S41 7QE

Dear Mr Jones

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 11 November 2010 to look at work in English.

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 and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment rose significantly in 2010 from average to above average, based on teacher assessment that was checked by other teachers in school.
- Achievement in communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been below average. Following recent changes to staffing, rates of progress have started to improve.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils catch up from below average attainment on entry to reach average standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. Fewer pupils than average gain the higher level 3.
- In the past, pupils made satisfactory progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. In 2010, Year 6 pupils made good progress towards ambitious targets. In the current Year 6, the good learning in the lessons and the

school's accurate assessment of pupils' progress indicate that the school is on track to sustain above average attainment.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- In the most effective teaching, enthusiasm and well-structured planning extends pupils' creative use of language and increases their enjoyment and confidence in writing. Tasks are pitched carefully at the correct level for different groups of pupils, with clear success criteria to guide them. Teachers use 'talking partners' well to engage pupils and promote their speaking skills. The methodical teaching of handwriting and phonics is well-supported by physical and visual demonstration and practice.
- Occasionally, lessons observed were focused on a mundane task rather than the challenge of skills to be learnt. On these occasions, insufficient use was made of precise assessment criteria to show pupils how to succeed. As a result, a few pupils lacked purpose and became distracted.
- In day-to-day lessons, assessment, marking and verbal comments from teachers provide pupils with good guidance on what they are doing well and how to improve. Teachers regularly monitor pupils' progress against their targets.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- Pupils have good opportunities to experience drama, poetry and the media. This is enhanced by the use of the school's amphitheatre which provides a dramatic setting for outdoor performance.
- Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) resources to present lessons and pupils make good use of ICT to prepare presentations for different audiences.
- Phonics is well planned into the curriculum and teaching assistants follow a well-resourced and targeted programme to develop the reading and writing skills of the weaker pupils in all years.
- Extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum, such as visits to the theatre and visits by writers, take place annually. A two-week radio workshop, which was taking place during the visit, provided a good opportunity for targeted pupils to develop their oral language skills and to make a radio programme which was listened to by their parents online and in the hall.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- The school's leadership has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of English and clear vision for improvement. You have taken effective steps since the beginning of term to increase the subject leader's time and responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of work in English.
- The observation of English lessons has been delegated effectively to the subject leader who has reported her findings to staff and governors.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to set improvement priorities in clearly written action plans. The literacy improvement plan has not been reviewed, to include a formal record of the impact of actions. There has not been a review of the impact of the strategies employed by teachers to tackle underachievement by individual pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Further improve attainment and progress by:
 - raising outcomes at the end of EYFS to at least the national average
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who gain Level 3 at Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by:
 - analysing and recording the impact of actions against targets in the literacy action plan
 - analysing and recording the impact of strategies to tackle underachievement by individual pupils.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector