

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



16 December 2010

Mrs S Howie
Headteacher
Wootton St Peter's CE Primary School
Wootton Village
Boars Hill
OX15HP

Dear Mrs Howie

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 6 December 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, the literacy governor and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently well above average over recent years, especially in reading where last year almost all Year 6 pupils exceeded the expected level. In writing, all pupils achieved the expected level, but very few exceeded this. Progress throughout Key Stage 2 is outstanding in reading and good in writing, with most pupils making at least the expected progress in each year group in writing and many exceeding this in reading.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils consistently attain well above average in reading and writing. While still above average, there was a slight dip in attainment in the most recent unvalidated national test results, especially with regard to the proportion achieving the higher levels in reading and writing. Progress is good throughout Key Stage 1.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communications, language and literacy that are around those expected for their age. They make good progress so that most achieve, and some exceed, expected levels by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1. Reading and language for communication and thinking are the strongest areas.
- There are no significantly underperforming groups and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early on and a good range of support is provided. As a result, very few fail to reach expected levels in both reading and writing by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The teaching observed during the inspection was good, with none that was inadequate. This is because, in spite of some loss of pace during transition points and a few missed opportunities to extend their learning, pupils made good progress during lessons, especially in writing and phonics.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and pupils' attitudes towards English and their behaviour in lessons are exemplary. Lessons are planned well and take careful account of pupils' previous learning and the wide range of age and abilities within each class. Activities are therefore matched well to pupils' learning needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially with regard to the teaching of phonics. Teaching assistants are trained well, especially in phonics and intervention strategies, and they provide good support to both teaching and pupils' learning.
- Ongoing assessment techniques such as pupils' self-assessment, the use of probing questioning, and thoughtful plenary sessions are used well to evaluate how well pupils understand what they are learning. For example, in a lesson where pupils were asked to make a story map which re-told the story of the 'Little Red Hen', incisive questioning helped pupils to understand what aspects of the story they could change and what needed to stay the same.
- Rigorous and accurate assessment and tracking systems are well-established and the outcomes are used well to inform planning. Books are generally marked well and use clear criteria to identify success in writing activities. There is some very good practice in place which ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their writing in the longer term. However, this is not applied consistently throughout the older classes with the result that some pupils are less clear about their longer-term targets. Occasionally, marking does not challenge untidy or carelessly presented work rigorously enough.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum is a real strength. It is extremely well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities and recent innovations, such as extension writing courses in partnership with Oxford University to support higher attaining pupils, are beginning to bear fruit. A well-planned approach to phonics, combined with an emphasis on speaking, listening and writing through the 'Talk for Writing' initiative, has further enhanced reading and is starting to raise standards more rapidly in writing. Some older pupils say that they would appreciate even more choice about what they write, and this indicates that the curriculum is successfully motivating pupils' enthusiasm for writing. One of the key features of the school's strengths in reading is the use of volunteers from the local community as 'reading counsellors' for each pupil.
- The English curriculum is further enriched by such activities as creative weeks, drama, visits by story tellers and poets, and the use of imaginative writing across the curriculum. For example, following work with a local poet, pupils wrote a series of outstanding poems about outer space.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Senior leaders and the literacy governor have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in English. In spite of consistently high standards in English, there is no sense of complacency and leaders have been proactive in raising standards further, especially in writing, where they acknowledge that more needs to be done before their own challenging targets are met.
- The outcomes of accurate and rigorous assessment, evaluation and monitoring of English throughout the school are used well to identify suitable priorities for improvement. Strategic plans are detailed, but do not always make it sufficiently clear how the success of some activities will be measured against outcomes for pupils. For example, although an improvement of 5 to 10% in Level 5 writing at the end of Key Stage 2 has been identified, there is no such measureable indicator for Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in writing across the school by ensuring that:
 - the good practice in target-setting is applied consistently across Key Stage 2
 - any poorer standards in the presentation of pupils' written work are routinely challenged

- strategic planning identifies measurable success criteria across the school with regard to raising standards in writing.

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

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector