

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



20 May 2011

Mr McLoughlin
Headteacher
Maricourt Catholic High School
Hall Lane
Maghull
Liverpool
L31 3DZ

Dear Mr McLoughlin

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 10 and 11 May 2011 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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Students' overall attainment in English at GCSE has been significantly above average for the last three years. However, the proportion of students obtaining the highest grades has not been so high in relation to the national average. On both these measures, the school confidently expects to see better results this year.
- For the most part, students are making good progress in English, though pockets of underachievement remain. Progress in Key Stage 3 has improved in recent years and the positive impact of this is now showing by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Standards in the sixth form have fluctuated from year to year, with some small groups of students. The present students in this key stage are making generally good progress and, for many, attainment is above average.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- All the lessons observed were taught well. The rate of students' progress and the school's monitoring of teaching confirm that this is now a typical picture.
- Teachers have very positive relationships with students. They use a range of effective strategies and well-considered resources to promote active learning, for example through open-ended group tasks and discussions.
- Lessons are carefully planned to extend students' skills and understanding progressively.
- In several lessons, questioning was used very effectively to deepen students' thinking about the literature they were studying.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough in lessons by either teachers or students.
- The quality of marking varies. The best provides a useful analytical commentary on students' work and gives clear, precise guidance on how to do better.
- Students' learning is aided by their positive attitudes and good behaviour. Students of all ability levels value the extra help teachers willingly offer if they need additional support.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum covers all requirements and is suitably balanced.
- The effectiveness and appropriateness of the curriculum are kept under review and thoughtful adjustments have been made to meet the range of students' needs. Improved planning of the curriculum for Key Stage 3 has been a key factor in raising achievement at this key stage.
- The school provides a range of programmes for lower attaining students and those who have fallen behind.
- The curriculum is enriched with a varied range of extra activities and a good number of extra-curricular clubs.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- The subject leader and senior staff have an accurate picture of the school's performance in English and they show a determined commitment to improving students' achievement and the quality of provision in the subject.
- In recent years, staff have benefited from a good amount of additional training. This has strengthened their teaching and engendered a shared

vision for teaching and the development of English at Maricourt. This is underpinned by a useful handbook for staff.

- Systems for monitoring students' achievement and the quality of teaching have been developed and are now robust. There is scope, however, to refine the use of assessment data at whole-school level, for instance in monitoring students' progress over time, to influence planning for further improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- consolidating and building on the recent improvement in students' progress, particularly in Key Stage 3 and for the more able
- further developing the use of assessment to support learning, through marking and the analysis of students' progress over time
- making better and more extensive use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in English

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

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector