

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



7 October 2011

Mrs H Brady
Headteacher
St Philip's CofE Primary School
Barrow Street
Salford
Greater Manchester
M3 5LF

Dear Mrs Brady

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 September 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 pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of two lessons and short visits to a further six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Year groups are small and include varying numbers of pupils from the language resource units, which cater for pupils with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities in language. Additionally, mobility of pupils is above average. Consequently, attainment and test results fluctuate considerably from year to year and do not always reflect the quality of the school's provision in English.
- Attainment in Key Stage 2 shows a discernible underlying trend of improvement and there is little gap between boys' and girls' performance. The 2010 leavers attained far better than the previous year group but the variables mentioned above caused a slip in 2011, so that national expectations were not met.

- The school's records show that, while many pupils are progressing well and the large majority make at least expected progress, pockets of underachievement remain.
- There is a strong trend of improvement in pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. By 2010, attainment in reading and writing was broadly in line with the national average. This represents outstanding progress by pupils, from a very low starting point in the Nursery.
- In most year groups, attainment in writing lags behind reading and, particularly in Key Stage 2, spelling and handwriting are weaker aspects of writing.
- Pupils' learning is aided by their positive attitudes to learning English, their very good behaviour and their high degree of application to work in lessons.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The teaching seen was predominantly good and some was outstanding. Teachers have good knowledge of how to teach English and the classrooms provide attractive, stimulating environments which support pupils' learning. Staff have very positive relationships with the pupils.
- The most effective teaching was very precise and was characterised by high expectations, which pupils rose to, and work that was closely tailored to pupils' varied learning needs. Personalised learning is a strong feature in the language resource units.
- Some lessons were slightly marred by less rigorous differentiation of work, leading at times to less challenge for the most able, or by less active approaches that meant some pupils were not fully involved.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum in English is planned carefully to match pupils' needs and interests and is kept under review. Proper attention is given to all elements of the subject, including poetry, drama and media.
- Opportunities for learning and developing writing skills in other subjects are well-organised.
- A good range of generally effective intervention programmes supports pupils who are at risk of low attainment or underachievement.
- The curriculum in English is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- School leaders have a well-informed, accurate picture of the school's performance in English, high aspirations for pupils and vision for the further development of the subject. Staff teamwork is strong and there are some very good in-house models of teaching.
- Systems for keeping track of pupils' attainment and progress are robust and are used well to determine the planning and allocation of additional support and intervention programmes.
- Plans for developing English in the school are appropriate and well-founded but do not state what improvements are expected to pupils' achievement as a result of the planned actions.
- A change of teacher responsible for leading work in English from this term has been managed well but the new subject leader has not yet had opportunities to monitor and evaluate work throughout the school through direct observation.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - building on pupils' much improved attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1
 - accelerating pupils' rate of progress in Key Stage 2
 - improving pupils' spelling and handwriting
- further strengthening the leadership and management of English by:
 - linking plans for the development of English tightly to the improvements expected in pupils' achievement
 - extending the subject leader's monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of provision across the school.

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

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector