

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Miss L McGann
Headteacher
Twiss Green Community Primary School
Twiss Green Lane
Culcheth
Warrington
WA3 4DQ

Dear Miss McGann

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 24 January 2012 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; observation of three lessons and short visits to a further two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- For the last five years, pupils' standards of attainment in English have consistently been well above the national average in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, in both key stages, attainment has slipped over the last two years, most markedly in reading in Key Stage 1. Standards are high in the current Year 2 and Year 6. Across the school, there is some variation in the proportion of pupils who are working at, or above, the level expected for their age.
- Taken overall, pupils' progress in reading, writing, and speaking and listening is at least good throughout the school. Some pupils make outstanding gains in learning but there are also pockets of satisfactory progress. For the most part, boys learn particularly well.

- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning English and their outstandingly good behaviour support their learning very well.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The teaching observed was good, with some of an outstanding quality. Staff have positive relationships with pupils, manage their classes well make good use of support staff, and mark pupils' work helpfully.
- The most effective teaching enthused pupils, who were fully involved in choosing how to approach work and in assessing their own performance. Very high expectations were clearly set out, all pupils were challenged to achieve their very best, and learning was checked skilfully during the lesson. Pupils benefited from very well-planned opportunities for purposeful speaking and listening.
- In some lessons, however, work was less well tailored for the range of pupils' learning needs, particularly for the most able. The opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their speaking and listening skills were sometimes limited.
- Several teachers are new to the school or to their current roles and senior staff are, wisely, keeping a close eye on the consistency of teaching.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- Pupils cover all aspects of the subject, including poetry and drama, through a good variety of planned activities. They have particularly good opportunities to use information and communication technology to develop learning in English.
- There are examples of outstanding provision and very promising practice in aspects of the curriculum. These are seen, for example, in work where English is integrated into topics that embrace several subjects and in the promotion of pupils' wider independent reading. However, such elements of curricular planning are not consistent across the school.
- The English curriculum is enhanced by a range of relevant visitors and educational visits, including a drama club for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- Subject leadership in English is developing well following recent changes, and is making a strong contribution to the school's drive for high-quality provision and to the staff's commitment to continuous improvement.
- The subject leader undertakes a good range of activities designed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision in English. The findings are used to determine where additional support is needed for

pupils, to halt any slips in progress, and to influence provision for staff development.

- The school has recently introduced a computer-based system for monitoring pupils' term-by-term progress in reading and writing. Senior staff, including the subject leader, are making good use of this information.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further raising achievement by:
 - strengthening the quality of teaching and spreading the school's best practice
 - accelerating progress, where necessary, to ensure that every pupil makes at least good progress, over time, in all aspects of English
- strengthening the curricular planning to assure a consistent and coherent whole-school approach to English in cross-curricular work.

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