

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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Mrs J Alexander
Headteacher
St Peter's CofE Primary School
Church Lane
Hixon
Stafford
ST18 0PS

Dear Mrs Alexander

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; and observations of five 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 above average for the last four years. In 2011, attainment in English was particularly high. The attainment of all groups of pupils was above average.
- At Key Stage 1, attainment in reading and writing has been above the national average for five years.
- In 2011 some pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress. Overall, pupils make good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They take care with their work and do well because lessons interest them and are well matched to their learning needs. They are enthusiastic about reading and articulate their views well with regard to books they have read.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy all aspects of learning in English lessons.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teachers use a wide range of resources including information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to support teaching and learning. Pupils say they enjoy English lessons and this was reflected in good levels of concentration. Year 1 and 2 pupils focused well when writing instructions about how to build a snowman, completing their instructions successfully and showing a good understanding of the vocabulary associated with time.
- Lessons are well planned, with tasks that are suitably matched to meet the differing learning needs of all groups of pupils. Steps to success are clear and shared with pupils to support learning in lessons. Teaching assistants provide effective support.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught systematically and pupils are grouped according to their ability to ensure that the learning is matched to their individual needs.
- The quality of marking is good. Teachers clearly identify when pupils have successfully achieved the learning objective and provide useful guidance on how to improve further.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The school has a well-planned curriculum to meet the interest of pupils. The creative approach to linking subjects together is effectively supporting good reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. Teachers involve pupils in shaping plans for learning and the interests of boys and girls are equally well reflected. Real-life situations are used well. For example, pupils have pen-pal links with pupils in a contrasting school in Birmingham. Writing letters and using email to communicate with one another enliven learning and promote good communication skills.
- Pupils enjoy reading because they develop the skills to read and are encouraged to read in school and at home to parents and carers. They enjoy using the school's library areas for fiction and non-fiction books. The borrowing of library books to read at home is promoted well.
- At school, pupils have good access to ICT for writing and research. Regular opportunities to see theatres productions, such as 'Alice in Wonderland' are planned. Visits from speakers with interesting information to share linked to the theme or topic being studied, serve to motivate and engage pupils well in English lessons. For example, a visit from a serving soldier and the stimulus of books written by the author Chris Ryan, successfully motivated pupils in their writing, particularly the boys.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- The whole staff team works well together and the acting English subject leader is supported effectively by you to sustain improvements and share good practice. The school improvement plan has correctly identified areas for improvement and goals and targets are clear. However, the impact of planned improvements is not measured precisely enough.
- Rigorous and effective assessments and the monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress are used well to set priorities and inform the target-setting process.
- Layered curricular targets for improvement in writing are devised for each year group following the analysis of assessments. In addition, following assessments in writing, personalised targets for all pupils are devised to support small individual steps for further improvement. Parents and carers are fully involved in these assessments through the 'Aim High' writing books, which are shared with families throughout the year.
- Resources are well-managed and effective strategies such as 'learning walls' to support teaching and learning in English are consistently applied throughout the school. Classrooms and corridors are bright and attractive with high-quality displays that celebrate pupils' written work and successfully support teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- devising precise measurable steps to achieve the desired goals in school improvement planning.

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

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector