

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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Mr C Stott
Headteacher
Beech Green Primary School
St James
Quedgeley
Gloucester
GL2 4WD

Dear Mr Stott

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 1 May 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 observation of parts of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Children enter the Reception classes with skills in communication, language and literacy that are below those found nationally. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment.
- Progress throughout the school in recent years has improved and is now good. Attainment in English by the end of Year 6 is above average. Changes to the curriculum and the implementation of effective assessment strategies have successfully narrowed the gap in attainment between boys and girls and improved the quality of writing across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make equally good progress because work is planned well to meet their learning needs.

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning in English. They contribute enthusiastically to discussions and behave well in lessons. Their good attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to their achievement.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Pupils benefit from teaching that is mainly good and some that is outstanding. The minor shortcomings that reduce the effectiveness of some lessons are due to pupils spending too long listening to the teacher. The time for them to engage independently in learning is therefore limited.
- The consistent use of success criteria in lessons enables pupils to know what they need to do to become successful learners. Pupils have a good understanding of how to achieve their regularly reviewed targets, especially in writing. Peer- and self-assessment are consistently well used to enable pupils to reflect on their progress.
- Teachers use effective and well-established strategies to assess pupils' progress in writing. As a result, progress in writing has improved although systems to assess reading are less well developed.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are consistently good, with comments that are positive and constructive, providing additional guidance to pupils about how to further improve their work.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils have positive and mature attitudes to learning because teachers provide good support and scaffold learning well through effective questioning and work that is well planned to match their learning needs. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support to both teachers and pupils.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned. There are good links to other subjects in the curriculum, making learning relevant and meaningful. For example, pupils were enthusiastic about their writing in science on forces and wrote well organised and detailed reports.
- More recently, the focus on improving reading skills is having a positive impact on pupils' love of reading. The well-resourced school library is staffed effectively by trained librarians who provide effective guidance and support to pupils who regularly use the facility for research and borrowing books. Useful leaflets have also been produced to encourage parents and carers to support their child's reading at home.
- All aspects of English are covered well, including drama, poetry and media. Texts are used effectively to support learning and the teaching of writing is given a high priority.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- Senior leaders work well together to fulfil their ambition to further improve outcomes for pupils in all aspects of English. Teamwork is strong, which is evident through the consistency of approach to marking, assessment and planning.
- Monitoring and moderation activities are developing well. This has led to a greater accuracy in teacher assessments in recent years. Senior leaders, including the governing body, acknowledge that the outcomes of these activities are vital in planning for further improvement.
- Resources are well managed and effective strategies such as the 'learning walls' in every classroom make a strong contribution to teaching and learning. Staff development has been well planned and effective. For example, the school has successfully implemented strategies for teachers to assess pupils' learning in lessons, which are consistently applied. Given these successes, the school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity for further improvements in English.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending effective assessment strategies in reading to identify next steps for pupils
- using the outcome of monitoring and moderation activities to plan for further improvement.

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