

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



31 May 2012

Mrs C Stylianides
Headteacher
The Gonerby Hill Foot Church of
England Primary School
Gonerby Hill Foot
Grantham
NG31 8HQ

Dear Mrs Stylianides

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 29 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory and improving.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Attainment in English has been broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2 in recent years. Standards rose at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 last year. Standards of writing have improved although the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 is not yet high enough.
- Given above-average starting points for many children, progress is satisfactory overall. The gender gap was less than average in 2011 and boys made more progress than girls. Progress overall was better in reading than in writing. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well and generally achieve nationally expected standards.
- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well. When lessons engage their interest, they show particular enthusiasm and will 'go the extra mile' for their teacher. Many pupils are articulate and confident although lessons do

not always draw on these skills sufficiently. Able pupils have high expectations of learning and tend to become passive if lessons do not challenge or inspire them.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- Positive aspects of teaching include: good relationships; the choice of engaging and lively topics; clear and helpful learning objectives; and the regular use of discussion to support writing. Where lessons are less effective, there is a limited range of practical strategies for differentiation and a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. On a few occasions, the pace slackens where teachers dominate lessons too much.
- Pupils mostly enjoy English although it was not often mentioned by older pupils as one of their favourite lessons. Pupils are very keen readers and have a good knowledge of authors and texts.
- There are some strengths to assessment. Marking is detailed and helpful. The best marking identifies targets for improvement. Standards of presentation are high. However, the impact of marking is less clear. Teachers' comments do not always reflect pupils' curricular targets and pupils have too few opportunities to reflect on or respond to marking.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and follows national guidance. Provision for poetry and classroom drama varies from class to class. There have been some good opportunities for 'visual literacy' through pupils making films or using cameras.
- The school uses a range of interesting cross-curricular topics that engages pupils. Links are made with English, especially in providing tasks for writing. At times, this works well and pupils can use the knowledge gained from topic work to inform work in English. At other times, topic work inhibits progress with literacy skills, for example, by adding an extra layer of complexity to the writing task.
- There is a strong emphasis on reading. This includes: the effective use of class readers in some classes; the phonic programme for younger pupils; developing work with parents and carers to encourage reading; reading logs; and an opportunity for older pupils to take part in a book reviewing event.
- Provision for writing has also improved and teachers provide good opportunities for extended writing. Tasks are chosen that provide real or simulated audiences, for example a letter to a car manufacturer about a new eco-friendly car. Talk is used well to support writing. Pupils have too few opportunities at present to re-draft their writing and more use should be made of laptops, in particular to motivate boys to write.

- A number of additional activities enrich the curriculum including a weekly graphic novel club, visits from theatre companies, a choral speaking event, and literacy activities linked with curriculum visits.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is satisfactory.

- The school acknowledges that standards in English should be higher. You are helping to raise expectations and to focus upon improving outcomes for pupils in all lessons. Some recent action has already been effective, for example in improving the range of books available in school and encouraging reading for enjoyment. Assessments suggest that test results will be higher this year, with an improvement in the proportion of level 5s.
- A good range of monitoring and evaluation strategies is employed. There has been extensive observation of lessons with good feedback to staff. There have also been thorough reviews of teachers' planning and pupils' work, as well as some feedback from pupils on English. This has led to accurate and honest self-evaluation.
- A detailed subject action plan places the correct emphasis on some aspects of teaching such as differentiation. The capacity for further improvement is good. The pupils have a real desire to learn and respond well to challenge. The school's task is to embed higher expectations and more consistently good teaching.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving teaching and learning in English by:
 - providing more challenge in lessons for all pupils, including the most able
 - implementing practical strategies for ensuring that lesson plans meet the needs of different groups of pupils
 - improving the impact of teachers' marking.

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

Philip Jarrett
Her Majesty's Inspector