

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 N Gardner
Headteacher
Winford Church of England Primary School
Felton Lane
Winford
North Somerset
BS40 8AD

Dear Mr Gardner

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 January 2013 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 seven part lessons which were all carried out jointly with the headteacher.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Pupils consistently achieve above average levels of attainment in English by the time they leave in Year 6. There is no significant difference in pupils' attainment in reading or writing. In 2012 the attainment of girls was well above the national average, which shows an improvement over recent years.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing. In 2012 all pupils, including those needing extra help and those eligible for additional funding, made expected progress and a significant proportion made better than expected progress in English.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about English lessons. During collaborative group work, pupils share their ideas positively, supporting one another well. They

sustain their concentration during independent activities. They enjoy reading and are able to talk about the books they read with interest and excitement. Many choose to write stories for pleasure at home and at school.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Expectations are high and pupils respond well when challenged.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide helpful feedback to enable them to understand what they need to do to improve their work. In the best examples, pupils respond to the marking and show the improvements in subsequent work. Although pupils are able to improve each piece of work following the marking guidance, they do not all have a clear understanding of their progress over time. Pupils are not always able to make effective use of their targets to help them to aim even higher because they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring them.
- Pupils have positive view about teaching in English lessons. They enjoy all aspects of learning. There are good relationships between adults and pupils which support pupils to develop confidence and independence in their learning. Teaching assistants support learning well.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that it is broad, balanced and meets the wide-ranging needs and interests of pupils. The school is starting to review and up-date the English curriculum to provide greater opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects, but this is at a very early stage of development.
- Reading for pleasure is promoted well through the 'Bookworm Challenge'. Teachers read stories and novels to their class and pupils show a keen interest in reading at home. Regular opportunities are now provided for pupils to engage in sustained writing activities, and initiatives such as 'Talk for Writing' are having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing.
- Opportunities are provided for pupils to visit the theatre and visits from story tellers and members of the community enhance learning. However, more needs to be done to increase pupils' excitement and engagement through further opportunities to experience the use of multi-media, drama and poetry.

Effectiveness of leadership in and management of English

The effectiveness of leadership in and management of English is good.

- Although there has been recent change at senior leadership level, senior leaders have a very clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in English and there is a common commitment to high standards and driving improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor pupils' learning and track their progress. Although strategic planning has a clear focus on raising achievement even further, it is not always made clear how success will be measured against outcomes for pupils.
- Regular pupil progress meetings between teachers and senior leaders enable suitable intervention strategies to be put in place where underachievement has been identified. Attainment has been consistently above the national average and the capacity for further improvement in English is good.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improve the curriculum by:
 - strengthening curriculum planning to ensure a coherent cross-curricular approach to the teaching of literacy skills in other subjects
 - increase opportunities for pupils to experience innovative and exciting activities including drama, poetry and media work
- improve the use of targets in reading and writing to ensure pupils are more involved in checking on their own progress and helping them to know the next steps they need to take to improve their learning.

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