

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Miss K Leyland  
Headteacher  
St Andrew's CE Primary School  
Barton Lane  
Eccles  
Manchester  
M30 0FL

Dear Miss Leyland

### **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 28 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 the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the inclusion manager and the reading leader; discussion with three Year 6 pupils; hearing two Year 2 pupils read; scrutiny of pupils' work; analysis of data; review of documentation; and observation of six lessons, a one-to-one tutorial, a reading group and the Reading Café for parents and their children.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Starting points in the Nursery are low. Most children are at least a year's development behind age-related expectations. Although attainment at the end of Year 2 is below average in reading and writing, most Year 6 pupils attain Level 4. Standards have risen over the last years to just above average in 2012.
- Pupils make good progress over time, most so at Key Stage 2. In 2012, nearly all pupils made at least expected progress. All pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding made two levels' progress, narrowing markedly the gap with other pupils.
- Evidence from last term indicates that progress is accelerating for the youngest children in linking letters and sounds and in early writing. The introduction across the school in September 2012 of two commercial

programmes – one linking reading and writing, the other in story-telling – has heightened work in the Nursery and Reception class to promote children's interest in print. Staff comment how children are starting to notice and to write simple words earlier than before.

- Year 6 pupils' work is well presented with neat, cursive handwriting and accurate punctuation. Biographies, letters and accounts show a sound awareness of structure and use of language for effect. This also typifies Year 2 pupils' stories. The oral rehearsal of stories, with actions to prompt memory, is proving particularly valuable in fostering boys' confidence in writing and their use of 'story language'.
- Reading skills vary; decoding skills are stronger than comprehension. Year 2 pupils read confidently but do not always know the meanings of words. The structured teaching of words and phrases increases pupils' vocabulary, which is often then used in writing. Older Key Stage 2 pupils are rising to the challenge of reading a long book in two weeks.

### **Quality of teaching in English**

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teachers and teaching assistants form a strong team delivering class and group lessons, one-to-one tuition, intervention programmes and support sessions. Classroom routines are well established and little time is lost when pupils change groups or move to other rooms. Sessions are well planned and prepared. Staff know the pupils and their needs; a strength is the high use of praise and encouragement to motivate and reward.
- Staff home in on every opportunity to model and to remind pupils of correct letter formation, the spelling of 'tricky words', the meaning of words and self-help strategies.
- Targets in reading and writing are prominently displayed but not all staff link feedback to them. Older pupils show effective and objective marking when assessing their own work against success criteria. Teachers' marking in English is usually detailed but in enquiry/topic work, pupils' skills and the quality of English content are not being recognised. Although non-fiction books are displayed to support current class topics, there is little to prompt key skills such as skimming and scanning.

### **Quality of the curriculum in English**

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- A high proportion of time is given to teaching English. Daily sessions cover phonics, spelling, handwriting, reading and writing. All classes have dedicated time for reading a class novel and extended writing. In addition, there is a plethora of support packages for those pupils who have not made enough progress or who need help to develop their language skills. In total, this forms a strong core with the basic skills being taught systematically and cumulatively from the Nursery onwards.

- Class novels and the resources that come with the two programmes provide a reasonable breadth of reading, although poetry is limited. Pupils run the library themselves; the issuing of rewards, reading challenges and also the selection of books for boys have heightened its use.
- The curriculum is extended out of lesson time through reading clubs, visitors, and visits to places of interest, including the local library. The Reading Café enables parents to pick up tips in how to read with their children. Homework is given a high priority: the school's learning platform provides pupils and families with online tasks and success criteria.

### **Effectiveness of leadership in and management of English**

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

- You and your staff are determined that every pupil will leave Year 6 as a fluent reader and writer. The shared responsibility for English is effective. Members of the team have particular areas of expertise and all contribute to and understand the intentions behind the actions planned and taken. By teaching English and leading a reading group, you provide a strong model.
- You have consulted other schools and weighed up the evidence before adopting the two English programmes, and have already evaluated their initial impact. The monitoring of teaching, however, has tended to focus on teaching skills more than how well the pupils are learning.
- You and the governing body hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. The tracking and analysis of pupils' progress is thorough. You have ensured that all who work in the school received training in the new programmes and are taking a similar line in developing the use of information and communication technology as a learning tool in English.

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- widening the range of reading material used
- assessing pupils' listening and speaking skills and planning specific speaking and listening experiences as part of enquiry/topic work
- evaluating how well pupils meet their literacy targets in enquiry/topic work
- giving more attention to how well pupils learn in English lessons.

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

**Sonja Øyen**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**