

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6644  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



04 October 2006

Ms Jenkins  
The Headteacher  
Northfield Primary and Nursery School  
Cox's Lane  
Mansfield Woodhouse  
Mansfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG19 8PG

Dear Ms Jenkins

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 October 2006 to inspect work in English.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject the visit had a particular focus on our current survey theme: provision for poetry. 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, review of pupils' work and observation of three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be satisfactory although some aspects are good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in English are satisfactory

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average although standards in literacy and communication are weaker than the other areas of pupils' work.
- Standards vary from year to year. The unvalidated Key Stage 1 results for 2006 were a marked improvement on previous years but remained slightly below national average. The Key Stage 2 results fell slightly. The performance of boys has improved substantially over the past two years; however, girls' results have remained pretty much the same.

- Performance data suggests that pupils' progress as they move through the school is broadly satisfactory in English. This was confirmed by other evidence including lesson observations and work sampling.

### Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory.

- This inspection judges teaching to be satisfactory overall, in line with the average rates of progress made by pupils. This judgement was confirmed by other evidence such as lesson observations and the work sample. Some of the teaching observed was good.
- Lessons were marked by good relationships and effective class management that produced very good behaviour and positive pupil attitudes.
- Phonic skills are taught systematically and well to younger pupils.
- Some good practice was observed in developing pupils' speaking and listening.
- Lessons do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in the mixed age classes. Opportunities to extend pupils' learning through independent work are limited.
- Assessment in English is good and well integrated within teaching. The school has a systematic approach to setting and reviewing targets, partly as a result of its involvement in the Intensifying Support Project.
- The school has recently revised its approach to marking. At present, marking is inconsistent and some teachers do not give sufficient feedback to pupils about their work.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school provides good support for the development of reading. All classes have a daily reading session involving independent and group reading. Teachers keep records of pupils' wider reading and some are especially effective at enhancing pupils' independent reading.
- Speaking and listening have been a priority in recent years. They are now well integrated in planning and opportunities for using talk to support writing across the curriculum are well developed.
- The school has a good programme of enrichment activities. This includes visiting writers and theatre groups, as well as a library club.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- The leadership and management of English have brought about a number of recent improvements, including higher standards of speaking and listening and better results by boys at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school has an accurate view of standards in English and acknowledges that achievement remains too variable. There is a clear sense of direction to work in English and good capacity to improve.
- The school collects and analyses a wide range of data. This enables it to target support effectively to where it is most needed.
- Monitoring and evaluation are very good. The school regularly and systematically reviews its progress in the ISP programme. In addition, it evaluates the impact of the various intervention strategies well.

## Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is satisfactory

- Pupils have positive attitudes towards poetry and enjoy writing their own poems. Some teachers are especially keen to share poems with their classes. Resources for supporting poetry are good and the school regularly invites poets into school to work with pupils.
- Poetry is built into termly schemes of work following the guidance from the Primary National Strategy. However, there is limited evidence of work on poetry in pupils' books.
- Most poems written by pupils are imitations of particular forms. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to use poetry to reflect their own experiences.
- Most teachers are uncertain about how to assess pupils' poetry. As a result, they tend to respond uncritically to what pupils write and to set expectations that are too low.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is satisfactory.

- Achievement overall is satisfactory. Boys' standards have improved substantially in the past two years. Evidence suggests that some more able pupils should do better in English.
- The school has an effective strategy for supporting pupils whose work is below average. It operates a number of intervention strategies and this programme is well managed and clearly evaluated.

- Boys and girls are equally enthusiastic about their lessons.
- The school provides good support for pupils with a wide range of special needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- extending challenge for more able pupils within lessons in English
- improving the quality of feedback to pupils through marking
- providing opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/Local Learning Skills Council. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and made available to the team for the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Phil Jarrett  
Her Majesty's Inspector