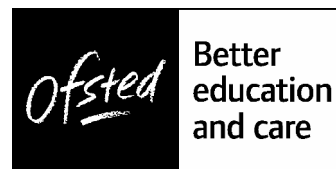


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



04 October 2006

Mrs Jones
The Headteacher
Parklee Community School
Wardour Street
Atherton
Manchester
Lancashire
M46 0AR

Dear Mrs Jones

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Monday 25 September 2006 to look at 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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons or part lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in English is good.

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average though in Year 2 very few pupils are working at an above average level for their age.
- There is an improving trend in the standards pupils reach by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils' rate of progress, though good overall, is weaker in Key Stage 1 where it is barely satisfactory.
- For the most part boys do not reach as high standards as girls. That said, the additional support for some boys in writing has proved

successful and led to good progress. There is some underachievement among the more able pupils but early in Key Stage 2 some of these pupils are working at a level well above what would be expected for their age.

- Pupils' personal development is good. They are well-behaved and responsible and contribute sensibly in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is good.

- Teachers manage pupils well and elicit good behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are briefed effectively so they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in lessons.
- Question and answer sessions are conducted briskly and used well to help pupils explore and extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Some very well organised independent group work was observed where very clear instructions provided the support pupils needed.
- The effectiveness of marking is variable, with some that is very well focused and helpful but also some that does little to inform pupils how they could do better.
- Assessment is developing well. The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress have highlighted pockets of underachievement, which are being tackled, and have led to higher but still realistic targets for pupils' achievement each year as they move up the school. Pupils are involved in self-assessment and target setting but identification of smaller steps in learning could help teachers to capitalise better on pupils' commitment to achievement.

Quality of curriculum

The English curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. The national strategy is followed and additional work is planned in speaking and listening and drama.
- Account is taken of pupils' particular needs, for example through the focus on boys' writing. Nonetheless, the planned work does not always provide enough challenge for the more able pupils.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- During an unsettled time the senior leadership team have provided oversight of the subject. This has proved effective and, as a result, after stalling for a couple of years, standards and achievement have recently improved. The lessons from this have been applied in the school's new structure for the leadership and management of subjects.
- The headteacher has good knowledge of pupils' performance and the quality of provision in English. The new subject leader is quickly getting a handle on the subject and has the capacity to move it forward.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is satisfactory.

- Staff and pupils enjoy poetry and, in discussion, Year 6 pupils showed a sound awareness of the differences between poetry and prose.
- Statutory requirements concerning poetry are met. In literacy session pupils have opportunities to read and write poems but progression in the teaching and learning of poetry is not planned.
- There are some worthwhile additional activities related to poetry, such as a visiting poet and a day on performance poetry organised in partnership with a local secondary school.
- The teaching of poetry seen was satisfactory but would have benefited from a greater focus on pupils' response.

Inclusion

Inclusion in English is satisfactory.

- Most pupils achieve at least well but small pockets of underachievement have not yet been eradicated.
- Boys do not generally do as well as girls, though the 'reading miles' approach, writing club, debating society, school newspaper and requirement to apply for monitoring jobs at school are positive developments to increase their motivation.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the achievement of boys and the more able pupils
- planning for continuity and progression in poetry
- the further development of assessment, in particular target setting and marking.

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

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools