

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



08 November 2006

Mr Cornall  
Headteacher  
Samlesbury Church of England School  
Potter Lane  
Samlesbury  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR5 0UE

Dear Mr Cornall

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23-24 November 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, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in English are satisfactory.

- Standards have been above average over recent years in English at Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Results compare quite well with other core subjects at Key Stage 2. However, pupils' writing is less good than reading at Key Stage 1.
- The PANDA data for 2005 suggests that pupils' achievement was a little above average and satisfactory overall. Trends over time are steady. Lessons observed confirmed that pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. They make good progress in reading and some aspects of speaking and listening.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory.

- All teachers manage classes well and form good relationships with pupils. However, some of the teaching fails to enthuse pupils. For some pupils, learning in English is too passive.
- The best teaching has clear learning objectives and makes good use of planned learning outcomes that give direction to the lesson. These lessons feature a wide range of strategies that involve pupils in thinking and talking about their tasks, as well as time for sustained writing.
- The satisfactory teaching has a slower pace, does not sufficiently involve pupils in activities and is too teacher-dominated. Sometimes teaching assistants are not as effective as possible in challenging and supporting pupils.
- Assessment in English has improved and shows good features. It is well integrated into schemes of work and teachers assess systematically against clear criteria which are shared with pupils. Some marking gives pupils a clear indication of their progress and what to do next.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Provision for English is broad. The school has schemes of work for all age groups which ensure a degree of consistency and progression in pupils' experience, despite mixed age classes.
- There is good support for reading including a clear focus on teaching literature and the use of guided reading journals by older pupils.
- The use of information and communications technology, for research and both drafting and publishing writing, is a strength. So is drama. Pupils of all ages and abilities greatly enjoy taking part in regular performances; they learn to interpret scripts and gain confidence in speaking to an audience.
- However, evidence from the visit suggests that some teachers make too little use of speaking and listening activities in English lessons.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory.

- The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership for English. His broad vision for the subject embraces the enjoyment of literature and drama, the development of language skills and the imaginative use of technology.

- Standards have been maintained, and subject improvement plans have addressed the improvement of handwriting appropriately. Teachers work well together to moderate assessment.
- However, planning for the improvement of writing, a priority for the school, is not fully effective.
- Good practice in teaching and marking has not been clearly identified and shared. Expectations are not always clear or well monitored.

### Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- Poetry is represented appropriately in schemes of work for all ages. Pupils show positive attitudes to poetry. They are keen to talk about or recite their favourite poems, from nursery rhymes to writing by significant poets.
- A focus on structure and language has informed pupils' own writing of poetry. Able pupils in particular enjoyed the challenge of crafting a sonnet. Precise feedback on how well they had used the form had led them to a clear understanding of its features.

### Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress academically and in their personal development. In this small school, provision is closely matched to individual needs, and all play a significant part in, for example, performances.
- Gifted and more able pupils achieve in line with expectations, and the school checks its use of strategies to ensure appropriate challenge.

Areas for improvement which we discussed included:

- raising achievement, especially in writing
- identify and share good practice to improve teaching generally
- providing more active learning for pupils through greater use of a wider range of strategies including speaking and listening.

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.

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

Susan Bowles  
Her Majesty's Inspector