

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mr Callaghan  
Headteacher  
Saviour C of E Primary School  
Eggington Street  
Collyhurst  
Manchester  
Lancashire  
M40 7RH

Dear Mr Callaghan

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 October 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 three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory but standards are below average.

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average, though higher in reading than writing. The very high rate of pupil mobility means that the standards achieved do not fully reflect the quality of teaching.
- Last year's leavers reached a broadly average standard. This shows what pupils are capable of. Standards in the current Year 6 are much lower. The school's records show that these pupils' rate of progress slowed in Year 5.

- Children make satisfactory progress overall, from a very low starting point on entry to Nursery. They get a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. Progress speeds up in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 pupils' rate of progress varies from year to year but is at least satisfactory overall.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They are well-behaved, co-operative and keen to learn. In the lessons seen they worked with determination and a good degree of independence.

### Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching in English is good and pupils' learning is satisfactory.

- All the lessons seen were well-organised; teachers managed their pupils well and had positive relationships with them.
- Teaching assistants are briefed effectively so they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning particularly for those who find the work difficult or need extra support and encouragement.
- The best teaching observed was of an outstanding quality. Very high expectations were rooted in the teachers' strong subject knowledge and clear objectives for the lesson. A pacy lesson was presented with enthusiasm, in a lively and varied way which inspired the pupils who, as a result, made very good progress.
- The work in pupils' English books is generally marked well. Pupils have useful feedback on their performance and most know how to improve.
- The school has begun to use assessment more effectively to keep track of pupils' rates of progress as they move up the school and to compare the achievement of different groups.

### Quality of curriculum

The English curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and the Primary National Strategy is followed.
- Additional work has been undertaken to develop speaking and listening skills which, for many pupils, are poor when they start school.
- Enrichment by visits and visitors is good, particularly for drama.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- The subject leader has strong subject knowledge and a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work in English. The school was already aware of the areas for improvement identified on this visit.
- She works closely with the headteacher to monitor teaching, standards and pupils' achievement; to ensure the accuracy of assessment and to analyse data. As a result, she is following a sound plan of action to improve provision in English and has ensured the focus on whole-school priorities, such as speaking and listening.
- There is good capacity to improve pupils' achievement.

## Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is satisfactory.

- Teaching of poetry in the lesson observed was outstanding.
- The Year 6 pupils interviewed all enjoy poetry, particularly writing their own poems and reading those written by their classmates. However, they could name few poets and do not recall reading and writing poetry in all classes.
- Statutory requirements concerning poetry are met but breadth and depth of coverage and progression in the teaching and learning of poetry are not planned.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good

- The school is a harmonious, ethnically diverse community and, in the lessons seen, all groups of pupils applied themselves equally well to their work and showed a good degree of commitment to achievement.
- Lower attaining pupils are supported well in lessons, often by teaching assistants.
- Pupils who are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language receive at least satisfactory support and achieve as well as their peers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:-

- raising standards in English, throughout the school, particularly in writing
- ensuring progression and eliminating dips in progress by
  - (i) improving the pedagogical and curricular links between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
  - (ii) more rigorous use of assessment information to pinpoint and eradicate pockets of underachievement
- planning for continuity and progression in poetry.

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

Pat Kime  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools