

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Ms S Lawless
Headteacher
Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School
Nightingale Square
Balham
SW12 8QJ

Dear Ms Lawless

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 June 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.

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 good with outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good. Standards are above average.

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Some pupils have high levels of attainment.
- Pupils make at least good progress. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. In 2007, performance in communication, language and literacy was significantly above the borough average.
- At Key Stage 1 in 2007, attainment in reading and writing was significantly above average although girls outperformed boys in writing. Performance in reading is currently above that of writing at level 3+.
- At Key Stage 2 in 2007, pupils did less well than expected in writing. Results fell to average, from above average in the previous two years, and fewer pupils made two levels of progress. Current work shows above average standards, notably at level 5+.

- Standards of speaking and listening are above average and outstanding for some pupils. Pupils are confident, articulate and fluent speakers. They sustain critical and reflective listening and respect and value the views of others.
- The presentation of written work is of a high standard.
- Outstanding provision for personal development includes a wide range of opportunities for collaboration, discussion, debate, including on philosophical issues, and presentations, including to the public.
- Effective teaching of literacy skills enables pupils to make good progress in subjects across the curriculum.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Some teaching observed was outstanding. Lessons were planned very well, took good account of differing needs and used a wide range of strategies and excellent resources, including technology, to sustain interest and motivation.
- Expectations were very high and excellent relationships between teachers and pupils promoted independent attitudes to learning very well. Good subject knowledge from very good investment in professional development, thorough and systematic teaching of skills and good questioning secured at least good progress.
- Pupils showed excellent behaviour and collaborated very well. They were keen to learn, worked hard, enjoyed the challenges presented to them and took pride in their achievements.
- Clear targets, thorough marking and self and peer assessment ensure pupils are clear about how they are doing and how to improve. Assessment of learning outcomes regularly informs planning and accurate moderation ensures consistency in teacher assessment.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good with outstanding features.

- The curriculum is carefully structured for breadth, balance and progression, creative, resourced very well and reviewed regularly for suitability and relevance. Opportunities for speaking and listening that include drama and philosophy, and enrichment activities are very strong features of provision.
- A strong focus on communication, language and literacy and good use of outdoor provision contributes significantly to progress in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' knowledge of cultures and faiths other than their own is promoted strongly, addressing a recommendation from previous inspection.

- Homework is regular, varied, provides very good opportunities for independent learning and research skills, extends and reinforces learning in school and involves parents well.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Very good leadership ensures high quality provision and contributes to above average standards.
- There is a clear sense of direction for English, clear priorities, good procedures and good opportunities for targeted professional development.
- Performance data are analysed very well and used very effectively to inform interventions for individual pupils and whole-school improvement priorities, such as a reconsideration of the teaching of writing. The progress of pupils is tracked particularly well.
- Excellent arrangements for monitoring and evaluation include parents and governors, and planning for improvement is very comprehensive.
- Provision for inclusion is outstanding. The school is very responsive to the needs of individuals and secures the inclusion of all pupils very successfully. Well targeted interventions secure at least good progress, close gaps in attainment and challenge higher attaining pupils. Teaching assistants contribute to learning very well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to improve achievement and raise attainment as outlined in the literacy action plan.

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

Rosemary Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector