

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



18 November 2009

Mr N Prockter  
Headteacher  
Heronsgate Primary School  
Whinchat Road  
London  
SE28 0EA

Dear Mr Prockter,

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 November 2009 to look at work to overcome pupils' socio-economic barriers to attain or exceed nationally expected levels for their age in literacy.

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 without their consent. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included discussions with senior leaders and middle managers. I also visited three lessons, conducted a learning walk, interviewed pupils and scrutinised the school's assessment data and documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- You communicate your vision to drive the school forward clearly. Together with your senior leadership team, you set the highest expectations for staff, pupils and parents. The school is an inspiring and purposeful environment where all pupils are given opportunities to reach and even exceed nationally expected levels.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and they adopt a mature approach to learning. The school's emphasis on developing speaking skills has resulted in pupils of all abilities willingly articulating their personal thoughts and emotions. This has increased pupils' precision in their choice of words and, consequently, their oral and written communication skills.

- The teaching I observed was outstanding. Each lesson had a clear developmental sequence starting with explanations of learning which linked to pupils' previous learning. Teachers were skilled at anticipating pupils' likely misconceptions and provided clear and detailed expectations of a 'good piece' of work. Learning was reinforced by the teacher modelling an example of a 'good piece' of work and then immediately asking pupils to apply their new learning. Finally, teachers gave clear feedback on how well pupils met their targets and what they could do next time to improve.
- The use of role-play areas across the school is effective in encouraging speaking skills and developing pupils' vocabulary. Role-play themes included popular novels, history topics or class projects. For example, a Second World War role-play area included speaking prompts and technical words on display. These were accompanied by visual images and historical artefacts. Ration books were displayed alongside recipe books with laminated speech bubbles used to record pupils' thoughts and ideas. Historical costumes and copies of a script which featured four characters further encouraged pupils' use of historical language.
- Success criteria are explained clearly to pupils and referred to throughout the lessons to set clear and challenging expectations. Pupils understood their targets and were immediately rewarded for including these elements in their work. Pupils' learning improved where they used these success criteria to evaluate each other's work.
- You carefully monitor and analyse your intervention strategies. By regularly gathering and reviewing relevant data, you evaluate how well they enable pupils to make progress. This, in turn, gives you the confidence to only use strategies that work for your pupils.

#### Areas for development

- We discussed the school's use of targets to raise standards. Pupils have a good understanding of the targets to improve their writing in four key areas; use of connectives, vocabulary, punctuation and in the openings to their writing. However, they are less sure of their targets to improve sentence structure, to make further progress in their writing.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield  
Her Majesty's Inspector