

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



20 January 2012

Mr K Norris
Executive Headteacher
St Peter's RC Primary School
Brentford Avenue
Whitleigh
Plymouth
PL5 4HD

Dear Mr Norris

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 12 January 2012 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observations of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average. Following a sharp decline in the results of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2011, the current attainment of most year groups is in line with the national average.
- The school's monitoring data show that although most pupils make satisfactory progress, pockets of underachievement remain, particularly in writing.
- Writing lags behind reading in all year groups and boys do less well than girls in writing in most year groups.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are a number of strengths. Teachers know the pupils well, relationships are positive and, through regular assessments, areas for development for pupils are identified.
- Lesson plans are detailed and clearly show the objectives for learning. Tasks are suitably matched to meet the differing learning needs of all groups of pupils. Clear success criteria are identified and shared with pupils to support learning in lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals and small groups of pupils.
- Work is marked regularly. However, the quality is variable and pupils are not provided with sufficient information about how to improve their work.
- Targets for improvement are devised for each year group following the analysis of assessments. However, these are not used effectively to enable pupils to monitor their own progress or provide them with their next steps in learning.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum provides a satisfactory balance between all aspects of English, and recently there has been a good focus on phonics.
- Provision for reading is improving. The school is increasing the resources for guided and individual reading and all pupils are encouraged to read at home.
- The school has developed effective links between subjects and the curriculum is planned to meet the needs and interests of pupils. However, pupils have limited opportunities to use their skills in extended and independent writing for different purposes and audiences. Similarly, the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped in writing.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is satisfactory.

- Rigorous and effective assessments and the monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress are used well to set priorities and inform the target-setting process. However, although suitable priorities, actions and timescales have been identified, strategic goals and aims have not been clearly devised which link directly to improving outcomes for pupils. Currently, no clear criteria by which the success of actions will be measured have been identified.

- The aims in English are clearly set out in subject documentation. Leaders and managers systematically monitor the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Professional development is planned well to increase the skills of teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching is evaluated to identify the progress made by pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment and improving pupils' progress in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes and audiences
 - identifying next steps in marking more regularly to support pupils to know how to improve their work
 - making more effective use of targets to promote learning and help pupils to monitor their own progress
 - identifying clear, measurable and challenging success criteria in development planning, which focus on outcomes for pupils.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector