

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr O'Brien
Headteacher
English Martyrs' RC Primary School
Wycliffe Road
Urmston
Manchester
M41 5AH

Dear Mr O'Brien

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 6 November 2006 to look at work in citizenship.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in citizenship are good.

- Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the key areas of the citizenship curriculum. They understand well their place in the community and how their behaviours affect others. They learn about key topics such as care for the environment, economic understanding and the European

Union (EU) and are encouraged to identify and respect the differences and similarities that exist between people.

- Pupils discuss well in small groups, but need more opportunities to develop their oral communication skills through the practice of public presentations and debates.
- The school council is widely respected and its members are rightly proud of their achievements. They are given real responsibility and their views are listened to, enabling them to genuinely 'make a difference'. The roles of playground leader and playground buddy are further examples of how pupils learn to help others and develop leadership skills.
- Participation in the wider community is more limited. Out-of-school activities tend to be very local and rarely involve pupils in wider experiences beyond their own community.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some examples of good practice.

- Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and use a range of approaches in the classroom. Lessons reinforce the importance of good citizenship skills and behaviours, such as listening, sharing, caring and taking turns.
- The best lessons involved pupils in considering complex questions, were related to topical issues, and met the needs of different pupils. However, in some lessons there was too much teacher talk and not enough independent learning. Teachers are also not using ICT to its full potential.
- Pupils engage well with their lessons and have good attitudes towards the topics. Their work is regularly marked and graded and many receive helpful comments.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The subject coordinator understands the requirements for citizenship and has developed a coherent and comprehensive programme with provision for in-depth work, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Participation is well prioritised and pupils take their responsibilities seriously, from helping the teacher in Reception class to the work of playground buddies.
- Pupils' understanding of democracy is not as well informed as it could be and needs to be better reflected in the way the school council is elected and constituted.

Leadership and management of citizenship

Leadership and management are good.

- Senior managers and the governing body have a good understanding of the requirements, and the subject coordinator is both skilled and experienced. Citizenship is regularly discussed at staff meetings and policies are reviewed annually.
- The school takes good advantage of local authority support and involves the parents and wider community.
- Plans to involve pupils in the monitoring of the citizenship programme demonstrate a genuine understanding of the underlying principles of citizenship education and a coherent approach to planning.

Subject issue: provision for teaching and learning about Britain's diversity

Issues of Britain's diversity are addressed in a number of ways in the curriculum. At both key stages the programme includes modules on 'diversity and difference' and the schools' mission statement emphasises empathy, tolerance and understanding of others. Pupils' work reveals studies of Ghanaian life, refugees and asylum seekers and world religions. In literacy, pupils explore other cultures, such as life in Jamaica and the lives of Indian families in the UK and in India. Work on the EU involves pupils researching life in other countries.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good. Lessons are well-differentiated to ensure that individual learning needs are met. Teaching Assistants are well deployed to assist pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils can apply for leadership roles and a wide range of pupils are selected to represent the school council. School funds ensure that all pupils can access out-of-school trips and activities regardless of income.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their oral communication skills
- broadening pupils' experiences beyond their own community
- developing teachers' use of interactive whiteboards
- reconsidering the way the school council is elected and constituted.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector