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Ms J Acklam
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Acklam

Ofsted 2010–11 best practice study: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visits on 17 May and 18 October 2010 to look at work in English.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in English. The publication will include case studies about individual providers. If your school is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment before publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: meetings with subject leaders, teachers and groups of students; scrutiny of departmental documentation; and observation of two lessons.

Features of good practice

- The department has responded very well to the area for improvement identified in the initial subject inspection. Students' wider, independent reading is now promoted effectively through a range of approaches including the class study of well-chosen texts at Key Stage 3, good use of feedback from students about their reading, support for weak readers, and improved links with the school library.
- English teachers form a dedicated and committed team. They work well together, sharing good practice and taking responsibility in different areas of the department's work. Teachers provide considerable additional support for students through after-school catch-up sessions.
- There is a very strong culture of reviewing and evaluating departmental initiatives. Recent examples include significant changes to the Year 9 curriculum to provide more effective transition for students into Key Stage

4 and the department's action in response to the most recent GCSE results.

- The department continues to provide a very wide range of enrichment activities for students.
- Innovative and original schemes of work engage students well. As a result, students speak positively about English and clearly enjoy their lessons.
- There are some particularly effective approaches to involving students in the work of the department. This includes asking for regular feedback about English lessons as well as opportunities for some students to contribute to the appointment of teachers, observe lessons and discuss issues of importance within the subject.

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

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett
Her Majesty's Inspector