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Mr N Capstick
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Capstick

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 3 November 2010 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; a learning walk; and observations of part of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was below average last summer and did not meet the school's challenging targets. However, the progress that this cohort of pupils made from exceptionally low starting points, because of the very high percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language, was nevertheless good. Pupils who had been in school throughout Key Stage 2 made at least two levels of progress, with many exceeding this. Taken over time, there is a consistent trend of improvement in both attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2.
- In Key Stage 1, achievement is good and improving. Pupils make good progress from slightly below average starting points in both reading and writing. This is as a result of the very strong emphasis placed on improving all aspects of reading and writing. Standards in handwriting and grammar and the enthusiasm that the pupils demonstrate for both reading

and writing are particularly good. The school recognises that, in spite of such improvements in recent years, more needs to be done to increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading and writing at Key Stage 1.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communication, language and literacy in English that are well below that expected. This is because the majority of pupils speak English as an additional language and, as a result, many have limited understanding of formal written or spoken English when they start school. The strong focus placed on speaking and listening and in providing a language-rich learning environment, means that children make good progress.
- A real strength of the school is the wide-ranging and highly effective intervention systems that are in place to support pupils with either special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, all minority ethnic groups and pupils who struggle with English make good and often outstanding progress, relative to their starting points.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is outstanding.

- Overall, the teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding because, in spite of the occasional temporary slowing of pace, pupils love their learning and make good or better progress in lessons.
- Excellent relationships, inspirational teaching and high expectations challenge, support and motivate pupils. As a result, they achieve well and enjoying their learning.
- There is excellent questioning of pupils which, although incisive and searching, values their responses and challenges them to think more deeply about the issues they are discussing. This also accurately informs the ongoing planning of pupils' learning.
- Teachers' excellent subject and pedagogic knowledge means that planning is tight and well-focused on the wide range of pupils' needs.
- Highly effective use of well-trained teaching assistants supports teaching and learning very effectively.
- The written guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work is outstanding. Teachers model excellent handwriting and provide clear and detailed comments which closely link to long- and short-term targets. Systems to involve pupils in assessing their own work and responding to teachers' marking are not yet fully embedded. Monitoring and assessment systems are effective and well-established. Data are accurately analysed and used very effectively to identify suitable targets and inform planning.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- A strength is the highly effective design of the curriculum which meets the very wide ranging needs of the pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language. It has breadth and depth and is underpinned by a developmental list of 'non-negotiable' key literacy skills, including the use of phonics, for each year group. This has had a significant impact on raising standards in pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Curriculum planning is highly responsive to pupils' needs and includes numerous features which enrich the curriculum. For example, a range of cross-curricular topics and the use of such strategies as 'The Mantle of the Expert' and the development of a school radio station have successfully met the needs of boys who have been less enthusiastic about writing.
- The highly effective and wide-ranging intervention strategies to support and engage pupils and their families who speak English as an additional language are a key strength of the school and exemplify best practice. The impact that these have had on the accelerated progress and outcomes for pupils in all aspects of English, as well as on the community as a whole, is outstanding.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are outstanding.

- Under your outstanding leadership and ably supported by enthusiastic and dedicated English and English as an additional language coordinators, enthusiasm for teaching and learning all aspects of English permeates the school. Strategic planning is clear, based on accurate data and sets ambitious but achievable targets. As a result, teachers and pupils enthusiastically support the drive to improve standards and accelerate their progress. Consequently, the school's capacity to further improve English is outstanding.
- Teaching and learning in English are rigorously, accurately and systematically monitored. Feedback to teachers is followed up and results in high standards of teaching. The careful monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that teaching and intervention support successfully meets their needs and that the best possible use is made of the available resources.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that pupils have a greater involvement in assessing their own learning and in responding to teachers' marking of their work
- increasing the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

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

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector