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Mr K Knights
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Knights

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 13 January 2011 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 observation of three part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Over the last three years, the attainment of Year 6 pupils has been broadly average although it varies from year to year because of the small numbers of pupils. It was well above average in 2009 but below average in 2010. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average. Although writing is stronger than reading in Year 2, it is the opposite in Year 6.
- Over time, Year 6 pupils have made broadly satisfactory progress from the end of Year 2, although this also varies from year to year. No consistent pattern of gender performance exists, with boys achieving relatively better than girls in Year 2 in 2010 but the reverse being the case in Year 6. The small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities makes similar progress to their peers.

- The school's assessment information indicates that current pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. The school has identified pupils' reading skills, especially reading for meaning, as an area for improvement.
- In the lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory and sometimes good progress. They listened well and most contributed willingly to discussion, especially when given time to talk with a partner first. Some pupils, often younger ones in a class or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, were more reticent despite encouragement by the teacher or teaching assistant. Pupils settled to work promptly and concentrated well.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory with good features.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons thoroughly. They take account of the wide range of age and ability in each class and use teaching assistants well to support individuals and small groups.
- Lessons are organised well and teachers maintain an appropriate pace. Relationships are good and pupils usually understand what they are to learn. Teachers use a variety of approaches and set different tasks according to pupils' ability. They provide criteria for success to help pupils understand what they need to achieve in a piece of work. However, these are not always sufficiently precisely related to a pupil's particular stage of learning and main target for improvement.
- Teachers ask questions that require pupils to explain their ideas but they do not always give them enough time to think or discuss with others and, as a result, some are not sufficiently confident to answer.
- Teachers set targets for pupils which are revised regularly. They mark pupils' work in detail but it is not always clear how pupils should follow up corrections of spelling and grammar. Teachers' comments usually refer to the main objectives of the work and often provide helpful targets for improvement but this process is not yet consistent across the school.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced with appropriate coverage of fiction, non fiction and poetry. Increasingly, pupils consolidate their writing skills through opportunities to apply them in other subjects but this is less developed for their reading skills.
- Pupils enjoy a range of creative work and use computers to aid their learning through conducting research, preparing presentations and compiling their work, for example as anthologies of poetry. A growing range of enrichment activities is provided, such as the reporters' club which publishes a school newsletter, the film and book clubs.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory and improving.

- The subject leader has a clear understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development based on careful analysis of assessment information. She has used this analysis effectively to develop relevant priorities for improvement. An appropriate plan for improving reading skills is currently being implemented.
- Teachers meet regularly to review key aspects of the subject and to moderate work. A thorough system for recording pupils' performance and monitoring their progress is in place. You meet with teachers each term to identify pupils who require further support to ensure that they make progress.
- You and the subject leader have an accurate understanding of the quality of provision and the key areas for improvement. You are committed to raising achievement and building on the sound systems currently in place.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving pupils' attainment and progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to think and to discuss their ideas with others before answering teachers' questions
 - further developing pupils' reading skills through practice in other subjects
- consolidating the effectiveness of systems for assessing pupils by:
 - using success criteria in lessons more precisely so that pupils know exactly what they need to learn
 - ensuring that pupils follow up teachers' corrections of spelling and grammar in their work
 - improving the quality and consistency of teachers' comments to pupils on what they should improve and how to do so.

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

Martin Cragg
Her Majesty's Inspector