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30 November 2010

Mrs H Nohavicka  
Headteacher  
Juniper Hill Primary School  
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Buckinghamshire  
HP10 9LA

Dear Mrs Nohavicka

### **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 17 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 the observations of parts of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently above average and last summer was well above average with regard to the percentage of pupils achieving and exceeding expected levels. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was more than double that found nationally. However, although this cohort made outstanding progress throughout Key Stage 2, other year groups make good progress relative to their high starting points at the end of Key Stage 1.
- In Key Stage 1 attainment overall is well above average, especially in reading. However, although most pupils attain the expected level in writing, the percentage of pupils who exceed this was too low last year. The school has recognised this and put in place effective strategies to

address the issue and standards in writing in Key Stage 1, as well as throughout the school, are beginning to improve accordingly.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve levels above that found locally and nationally. Children's skills in linking letters with sounds and reading are particularly good because of the highly effective teaching of phonics in the Reception classes. Although still above average, boys' achievement in using language for communication and thinking is a weaker area.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the high percentage of pupils with statements for physical or learning difficulties, is extremely impressive in English. From often very low starting points, these pupils consistently make outstanding progress with many achieving and some exceeding expected levels by the end of Year 6, in spite of often very serious physical and learning disabilities. This is because of the very positive 'can do' ethos of the school. There are detailed and accurate assessment and tracking systems which ensure that the ongoing needs of pupils are matched with appropriate teaching and support. This is an outstanding feature of the provision.

### **Quality of teaching in English**

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The teaching observed during the inspection was good overall, with some that was outstanding and none that was inadequate. This is because, in spite of some missed opportunities to extend their learning, pupils thoroughly enjoy their English lessons and make good progress.
- The key feature of outstanding teaching is where creative ideas and humour are used to inspire and motivate pupils to do their best. For example, in a lesson on adverbs, pupils were thoroughly enjoying playing an ingenious game which ensured an in-depth understanding of how to use these to create atmosphere in their writing about 'Macbeth'.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and pupils' attitudes towards English and their behaviour in lessons are exemplary. Teachers plan effective lessons, model writing well and have good subject knowledge. As a result, the pace of lessons is good and pupils make good progress.
- Highly trained and skilled teaching assistants are used very well to support both teaching and pupils' learning, especially those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Rigorous assessment, tracking and marking systems are well established and pupils say that they find guidance on how to improve clear and helpful. They have a good understanding of their targets because they are routinely involved in assessing their own work. In most lessons, questioning informs ongoing assessment effectively, but the school is aware that this needs further embedding in some classes.

## **Quality of the curriculum in English**

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum provides a good breadth and balance between reading, writing, speaking and listening and is well designed to meet the wide-ranging needs of the pupils. Drama is a strong feature, and there are a number of highly effective ways in which the curriculum is enriched, for example through special days, visits by actors and theatre groups, and the high profile placed on performing Shakespeare in Year 6. The use of speaking and listening skills to support high-quality extended writing is an emerging strength.
- Medium- and long-term planning are good, especially in relation to how literacy skills are taught in other subjects. However, the school recognises that there are inconsistencies in short-term planning. The school is aware that, in a few instances, not enough attention is paid to matching the activities to the needs of all pupils, based on their prior learning.
- A wide range of intervention strategies is used well to meet the needs of pupils who require either long- or short-term support to achieve their potential. This is because they are suitably adapted and monitored closely to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.

## **Effectiveness of leadership and management in English**

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Senior leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in English. They have led staff successfully to create an ethos that has challenged complacency and generated a strong commitment to raising standards further in English, particularly with those pupils who struggle.
- Rigorous monitoring, detailed audits and the accurate evaluation of data identify suitable strategic priorities. However, the improvement plan to address these priorities in English does not make it sufficiently clear how the success of its actions will be measured against outcomes for pupils across the school.
- The school is very well resourced for English and the school library is particularly well-organised and used by all the pupils.

## **Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that the very effective strategies that most teachers use to assess ongoing pupil progress and plan teaching that meets their needs are used consistently throughout the school
- ensuring that improvement planning clearly identifies how the success of actions is to be measured against outcomes for pupils

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**