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Miss F Sayers  
Acting Headteacher  
Rotherfield Primary School  
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Dear Miss Sayers

### **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 2 February 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 documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment has fluctuated slightly over three years but remains broadly average. Well-directed support for less able pupils and those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is having a positive impact, especially on reading. Pupils' writing is becoming more effective, reflecting a school-wide focus on vocabulary extension. There are examples of lively and technically accurate writing by older pupils.
- Girls do better in formal assessments than boys; all Year 6 girls in 2010 achieved at least Level 4. In lessons, the gap in attainment is less visible; boys respond well to the topics presented and most show confident speaking and reading skills.
- Progress in English over three years has been significantly better than average for all groups, including boys. The small group of School Action

children made the strongest progress. Pupils' written work shows good progression from term to term.

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

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teaching strengths include: enthusiastic subject knowledge; good questioning skills; well-structured lesson planning to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities; brisk pace; creation of vivid and engaging displays to prompt and reinforce learning; and confident use of varied resources. Teaching assistants are well deployed, principally to support less able or less confident pupils.
- Teaching and learning are less effective when, on occasion, an activity is not fully exploited to prompt imagination and understanding. Younger pupils do not always understand the purpose of 'starter' activities when there is no clear link with what follows.
- A happy rapport with teachers encourages pupils across the age and ability range to be responsive and active learners.
- The most able pupils are not always presented with challenge that prompts higher order thinking and creativity. Opportunities for them to take responsibility for their learning and to lead others are limited.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum has recently shifted towards a more theme-based and cross-curricular approach. A two-year cycle avoids repetition in the mixed-age classes. Continually updated information about pupils' knowledge and skills is used well in lesson planning. Links to subjects such as history and science give pupils a sense of purpose in their writing. A well-structured phonics programme contributes strongly to pupils' literacy development. The curriculum is still evolving.
- A significant factor in extending pupils' learning is the fast-developing use of information technology. Access to the school's 'learning platform' allows parents and carers to monitor and support their children's progress. Pupils create web pages to display their ideas and to develop links with schools in very different situations – in Nigeria, for example.
- The curriculum is well extended through popular clubs, such as film and drama, and regular events such as Book Day and writers' visits.

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

Leadership and management in English are good.

- A confident and practical vision for English has wide support. The focus on reading is extensively resourced by investment in books and by the

development of classroom and corridor displays that imaginatively combine pictures and text.

- Monitoring of teaching and learning is based on the accurate assessment of pupils' progress. Through links with other schools, assessments are regularly moderated and good practice shared. Transition to secondary school is eased by activities bringing Year 6 and Year 7 together. Strengthening mutual understanding of curriculum, teaching and assessment with local secondary schools is a development priority.
- Pupils' enjoyment of English, the raising of reading standards and improvements in teaching indicate that capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- raising the level of challenge and extending opportunities for independent and creative work for the most able 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

**Patricia Metham**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**