

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



8 February 2011

Mr K Crawford  
Headteacher  
Kingstone High School  
Kingstone  
Hereford  
HR2 9HJ

Dear Mr Crawford

### **Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: English**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 26 and 27 January 2011 to look at work in English, accompanied by Chris Nye HMI on 26 January 2011.

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 students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Students enter and leave the school with broadly average attainment in English. Their attainment is higher in speaking and listening than in reading and writing. Results in GCSE examinations show that attainment in writing is slightly higher than in reading.
- All year groups make satisfactory progress, including those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students of all ages expressed an interest in writing and they appreciated and enjoyed the opportunities for open-ended discussion in lessons. Younger students were more positive about reading than those in Years 10 and 11.
- Students were generally well behaved in lessons, sometimes showing good levels of sustained concentration. A small minority were less willing to engage in their learning and remained passive. When activities were well

paced and engaging, students' interest and rates of progress rose considerably.

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

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall although examples of good practice were observed. In the best lessons observed, teachers had clear expectations of the quality of the work students should complete and ensured that all remained on task. They established good relationships and provided good help and support to individual students. In these lessons, speaking and listening activities engaged students well in their learning.
- Exercise books show a good volume of written work which is marked so that students know what they have achieved and how to improve their work. However, the style and quality of marking is inconsistent. Lesson planning is not sufficiently influenced by assessment information to cater for the needs of particular groups or individuals.
- Learning objectives are not sufficiently specific to enable the students to concentrate on the skills that they are developing in particular lessons. Lessons sometimes do not proceed with sufficient pace to ensure that the students make good progress.
- Teachers are skilled at using questioning to open up discussion. However, this is not always extended to challenge students to develop their thoughts into more advanced arguments in their oral work. Questioning does not always require all students to take part, relying on questions to the whole class and responses from volunteers.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum across the school meets requirements. At Key Stage 3, it gives a broad overview of what should be covered. It is not so clear on how essential skills will be taught to ensure progress. Opportunities for assessment are not always sufficiently related to the schemes of work and their scope is sometimes too general. Nevertheless, the range of activities and the encouragement of active approaches to learning enthuse the students about their learning.
- Until this year, students at Key Stage 4 completed GCSE English in Year 10 and continued to study either English Literature or media studies in Year 11. This is being modified and reviewed for the current Year 10. This policy resulted in improvements in the proportion achieving a good grade at GCSE but restricted the proportion attaining the highest grades. It also had an adverse impact on the breadth of experience in reading.
- Across the whole school, the curriculum is enriched by a good range of trips, visits and events that complements the programmes of study and enables students to develop skills in different contexts and settings.

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

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory.

- The English department has emerged from a period of turbulence. Four of the department's six teachers are new to the school this year. The head of department took up her post at the beginning of January 2011. The previous head of department successfully raised achievement so that it became securely satisfactory.
- The quality of the new head of department's teaching is excellent, enabling her to lead improvements in this area. She has analysed provision and outcomes in English, identified priorities and begun to devise plans for improvement. Her findings and recommendations accord with those of this inspection visit. However, planning for improvement within the department currently lacks the drive of a detailed formal plan.

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

- providing all students with appropriate challenge in lessons by:
  - ensuring that pace is increased and sustained throughout the learning activities
  - using assessment information to identify precise learning objectives for classes and to plan activities for groups and individuals based on their current skills and learning needs
  - developing questioning techniques that require students to further their thinking and express their thoughts in more complex language
- improve the curriculum by:
  - devising assessment activities that are integrated into the content of the schemes of work and ensuring that the schemes of work promote progression in important skills
  - developing initiatives to broaden the range and increase the enjoyment of reading
- improving the quality of strategic planning by identifying prioritised actions with measurable targets for success, set within clear timescales and a cycle of monitoring and evaluation.

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

**Andrew Harrett**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**