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Mr A Reilly
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Reilly

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 and 18 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 relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Children enter the school with skills well below those expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress in their learning, reaching standards that are above average by the time that they leave in Year 6. Careful attention to the needs of all pupils, including those at an early stage of learning English, ensures that all groups of pupils do well. Attainment is higher in reading than in writing, but the gap has narrowed significantly in recent years.
- Although the pupils make excellent progress overall, their rate of improvement is faster in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' behaviour in English lessons is outstanding. They respond very positively to the range of activities in lessons. They take pride in their work

and speak about it enthusiastically, eager to share their knowledge and their pleasure in learning.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is outstanding.

- Lessons are prepared well so that the pupils are very clear about what they are learning. Teachers skilfully ensure that tasks have a clear purpose and audience so that pupils are well motivated and engaged in their learning. Teachers have successfully focused on improving writing skills, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils respond positively to the challenge of regularly writing at length.
- Teachers skilfully ensure that speaking, listening, reading and writing are well integrated in lessons. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to make at least good progress in their learning. Teachers are well supported by colleagues who work closely and well with pupils and their families whose circumstances are likely to make them vulnerable.
- Assessment in lessons is good, enabling teachers to modify work to suit the needs of individuals. However, marking in exercise books does not sufficiently inform pupils precisely what they have achieved, nor does it specify the next steps that they should take to improve their work.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum is carefully designed to promote improvement in all aspects of English. Pupils respond very positively to the imaginatively designed themes and topics that skilfully capture their interest and improve their skills and knowledge so that they make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Subjects are linked well so that literacy is promoted effectively across the curriculum, such as in religious education. Consequently, there are many carefully planned and effective opportunities across the curriculum for pupils of all abilities to apply and improve their skills in English.
- Schemes of work are carefully planned to provide interest and to promote achievement well across the full range of reading, speaking and listening and writing activities.
- Pupils speak very enthusiastically about the trips and visits that they make to theatres and museums and the input of visitors to the school, such as local writers.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are outstanding.

- Excellent team work between senior and middle leaders has led to significant improvements in attainment and progress in recent years. All those with responsibilities in this area work together regularly and effectively. The notable success in raising achievement in writing, and of sustaining it in reading and speaking and listening, is a direct result of the team's relentless drive and ambition to provide the pupils with the best possible education in English.
- Leaders regularly monitor and accurately evaluate work in English, leading to successful initiatives to raise achievement. They have rightly and successfully focused on improving achievement in Key Stage 2 and acknowledge that they have not yet had such an impact in Key Stage 1.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of marking across the school by ensuring that it states precisely what has been achieved and specifies clearly the next steps that pupils should take to improve their work
- ensuring that pupils make better progress in Key Stage 1 by implementing initiatives that have been successful at Key Stage 2 in the younger year groups and focusing on Key Stage 1 more emphatically in monitoring and planning.

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