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Mrs S Stote  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Stote

### **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 10 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 three lessons and a shorter phonics session.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average. There is a gap between standards in reading and writing although this is in line with the national trend. Boys attained more highly than girls in 2010 although, in general, girls do better than boys in the English tests. The number of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 has slipped slightly in recent years.
- Children's communication and literacy skills are below expectations on entry to the school. Progress across the school in English is good, as confirmed by contextual value-added figures placing the school in the top 25% nationally. The proportion of pupils making expected progress is also better than average. Most groups of pupils make similar rates of progress. The school takes in a number of children from Traveller families and some of these pupils achieve extremely well.

- Progress in the lessons observed was good. Pupils behaved very well and were enthusiastic. They are especially keen on reading, and enjoy opportunities for drama and role-play. They appreciate the way that teachers make lessons lively and varied. Some of the older pupils are confident and speak maturely and well.

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

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The lessons observed were good. Teachers were confident to take risks and try new ideas. Lessons were often creative and imaginative. In particular, teachers used a range of active strategies to promote writing, including drama and role-play, photographs and other artefacts, and educational visits. Relationships with pupils were strong and planning was effective, including collaboration across classes and some well-directed contributions from classroom assistants.
- Teachers consistently chose lively activities that motivated pupils although the impact of the activities on learning was not always as strong as it might have been. At times, the level of challenge for more able pupils was not high enough.
- Assessment in English is good. The best marking is of very high quality, consisting of detailed feedback to pupils about both strengths and areas for improvement. There is good consistency in teachers' use of curricular targets for individual pupils. As a result, pupils are very clear about how to improve their work, especially in writing.

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

The curriculum in English is good.

- The school has developed a topic-based curriculum with good links between English and other subjects. Pupils recognise the coherence this creates. They enjoy learning and this has had a positive impact on improved progress in recent years.
- These cross-curricular links provide a good context for work in English and pupils are stimulated by visits, such as to the Beatles museum in Liverpool, and programmed events, such as the Greek Day. Their progress is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities including visits to a local pantomime, visits to school by theatre groups and the drama club.
- Writing is well promoted through cross-curricular work and the lively stimuli listed above. Pupils are now positive about their writing. There are also well-planned approaches to teaching spelling and handwriting. However, the work scrutiny suggested that there is too little extended writing in some classes and more emphasis is needed on establishing a clearer context, audience and purpose for all writing tasks.
- Reading is promoted well and enables pupils to make good progress. The school has established a consistent approach to teaching guided and independent reading and promotes wider reading through the involvement

of both the school and the public library. Parents have been given helpful advice about ways in which they can support learning in English.

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

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Pupils' progress is monitored carefully; this includes the performance of all groups including the Traveller children and pupils who are eligible for free school meals. As a result, senior leaders are able to intervene where progress appears to be less effective.
- Very good use is made of a wide range of monitoring activities including lesson observations, work and planning reviews, and some feedback from pupils. This has enabled the school to come to a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses in English. For example, the school has identified weaknesses in writing as its current priority for improvement. Responsibilities for monitoring provision in English are delegated well across senior members of staff and the newly appointed subject leader is becoming increasingly involved in developments.
- Senior leaders have managed to improve pupils' progress in English over recent years and put in place a curriculum that fires pupils' imagination. Teachers have been encouraged to experiment and this is leading to some imaginative teaching. The subject leader is a good classroom practitioner and has identified a range of potential developments in English. The capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2, including raising the level of challenge for them in lessons
- improving the teaching of writing by reviewing practice across the school for pupils in drafting and editing work, increasing the proportion of extended writing, and providing a clear context and audience for pupils' writing.

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

**Philip Jarrett**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**