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Mr J Willetts
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Willetts

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 15 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.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average and stronger in speaking and listening and reading than in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning overall and good progress in speaking and listening.
- The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 has risen, with many of these pupils making good progress in their learning. Pupils of average and lower ability make satisfactory progress.
- Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are well motivated and show commitment, interest and engagement in their work. They speak confidently and enthusiastically about their reading.
- Some pupils enjoy writing but, generally, they are not so enthusiastic about this aspect of their work.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- The three lessons observed were good. However, the quality of teaching overall is not yet sufficiently consistent or sustained over time to promote securely good progress.
- In the best practice, lessons are well paced, purposeful and the pupils rapidly become absorbed in their learning. In these lessons, teachers and their assistants skilfully monitor the progress made by individuals to ensure that all are on track.
- Pupils are becoming used to writing longer texts through initiatives designed to provide them with the techniques to do so. This has improved their vocabulary and paragraphing. However, questioning techniques do not sufficiently challenge the pupils to use more complex sentence structures in their speech and writing.
- Recent improvements in assessment provide pupils with a clearer view of what they have achieved and how to improve their work. Teachers have an accurate understanding of the pupils' attainment. In some classes, pupils are involved well in the assessment process on a daily basis. In the very best practice, this regularly informs lesson planning. However, this is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed, providing support for pupils so that all groups make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, extensive levels of support are not always balanced effectively enough by opportunities for these pupils to work independently and so make even more rapid progress.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is significantly strengthened by a wide range of trips which provides opportunities for improving all aspects of the subject. Trips to Stratford-upon-Avon and whole-school outings to such places as Weston-super-Mare provide pupils with rich experiences which are skilfully used as the basis for improving reading and writing. These activities, and visits to the school by poets, are highly valued by the pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and flexible, meets requirements, and provides opportunities for a full range of activities. However, whereas some teachers are very skilled at modifying their planning to meet the particular needs of their pupils, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Leaders have developed good systems for monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes with a cycle of lesson observations, scrutiny of

planning and evaluation of written work in exercise books. There is a shared and accurate understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development.

- Leaders communicate a clear ambition and determination to raise standards. The school is developing sound strategies for sharing the good and occasionally outstanding practice in teaching and learning across the school. The overall quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessment are improving.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using assessment information on a regular basis to modify lesson planning to meet the current needs of all pupils in lessons
- ensuring that the support that enables pupils to make satisfactory progress is matched by providing them with the opportunity to undertake tasks independently and so improve their ability to make sustained good progress in their learning
- using a range of questioning techniques to encourage pupils to extend their thinking and express themselves in complex and well-structured sentences in their speaking and 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

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector