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Mr K Clough
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Clough

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 8 March 2011 to look at work in English. I particularly appreciated the welcome that you gave my colleague, Ann Henderson HMI, during this inspection.

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 good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently well above average, especially in 2010 when every pupil achieved the expected level and the large majority attained the higher level. Exceptionally high standards in reading and speaking and listening are evident throughout Key Stage 2, and although standards in writing are slightly lower, they are still above that expected for their age. Pupils make outstanding progress in reading throughout the key stage. In writing, learning and progress are good. The school is, nevertheless, working successfully to raise standards further in writing, in particular through ensuring higher standards in handwriting.

- In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is exceptionally high with consistently well above average outcomes at the end of Year 2. Standards in speaking and listening are also outstanding. In writing, attainment is consistently above average although this has dipped slightly in recent years.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communication, language and literacy that are above those expected for their age. They make good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy, especially in writing. By the time they transfer to Key Stage 1, many pupils exceed expected levels in these areas.
- There are no underperforming groups and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress relative to their starting points. In the current year, the higher proportion of pupils in this group are on track to meet or exceed their challenging targets. This is because their needs are met through the provision of highly personalised and effective support.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The teaching observed was never less than good. Teachers make good use of assessment data to plan their lessons so that activities meet the wide ranging ages and abilities of the pupils. Teachers have high expectations to which pupils eagerly aspire.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and pupils have exceptionally positive and mature attitudes towards their learning. The pace of lessons is brisk and carefully differentiated questioning is used well to assess pupils' understanding and reinforce learning, although opportunities are occasionally missed to challenge pupils even further. Pupils are confident in their responses and throughout the school their speaking and listening skills are a strength.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially with regard to the teaching of phonics. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide consistently good support to both teaching and pupils' learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) and classroom resources are used well to support and reinforce new learning.
- Pupils' work is accurately marked with detailed and helpful guidance. However, the best practice in following up how well pupils address the issues raised in marking is not yet consistently applied throughout the school. As a result, pupils are not always aware of when they have achieved their targets.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that it is broad, balanced and meets the wide-ranging needs and interests of all the pupils. The school is

starting to review and update the English curriculum and policy to ensure that the currently strong structure which is based on skills progression is enhanced by a greater emphasis on creativity. Newly introduced strategies, such as 'Big Write,' are starting to have a positive impact on improving writing. The teaching of phonics is well established. Reading and writing cover a wide range of genres, with a strong emphasis on opportunities for extended writing.

- ICT is used very well to support both teaching and learning and the newly introduced learning platform is enhancing homework for older pupils and helping parents to become even more involved in their children's learning. Cross-curricular links are strong, such as in history where the study of evacuees is covered effectively through a range of reading and written work connected with Nina Bawden's book, *Carrie's War*. Curriculum enrichment opportunities are good, for example through theatre trips and regular performances, mainly linked to festivals.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Although a number of recent adjustments have been made to the leadership and management of English, senior leaders and managers have a very clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development and share a common commitment to high standards and driving improvement. This is because effective systems are in place to monitor pupils' learning and track their progress, and these lead to challenging but achievable targets. Although strategic planning has a clear focus on raising attainment further in writing, it is not always made clear how success will be measured against outcomes for pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- updating curriculum plans and policies to ensure that recently introduced strategies to improve writing are fully embedded
- ensuring that the existing good practice, in following up how well pupils respond to marking, extends fully throughout the school.

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

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector