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Mr Hill  
Associate Headteacher  
Glenburn Sports College  
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Dear Mr Hill

### **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 14 and 15 March 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 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.

- Attainment is low but improving at a good rate in response to better teaching. The school has given priority to improving GCSE results. In 2010, the percentage of students obtaining passes at grades A\* to C improved greatly and the current Year 11 are on course to do even better on this measure.
- Overall, students make satisfactory progress from a low starting point. However, progress is not even. It is better in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, where a significant number of students are not reaching the standard they should. There are also differences between groups of students with girls generally doing better than boys, and pockets of underachievement among the most able students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## **Quality of teaching in English**

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- The mix of good and satisfactory teaching in the lessons seen, students' work and their progress confirm the school's judgement that, overall, teaching in English is satisfactory.
- Teachers invariably have good relationships with the students. In some instances, their rapport and judicious use of humour have a very positive impact on students' commitment to learning. Students appreciate the fact that teachers take a lot of trouble to support their learning in lessons and beyond.
- There are examples of good use of assessment. Work is usually matched to the range of students' ability within a class. In the best instances, assessment is also used effectively throughout the lesson and students are involved successfully in taking on challenging targets and evaluating their progress towards them.
- The most effective lessons seen moved along briskly towards students meeting clear success criteria and they included a variety of activities which interested students.
- Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, it was because of one or more of the following factors: a slower pace and less challenging work which meant students did not have to concentrate hard or apply themselves so intently; superficial questioning that did not push students' understanding on; or teachers talking too much so students had limited opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- Teachers follow the marking policy and usually indicate how students might improve their work. However, they do not always check that students have acted on their comments.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The English curriculum covers the statutory requirements. It ensures sufficient coverage of areas such as media, drama and poetry.
- The planning of work for Key Stage 3 has improved recently and now includes some topics for study which are designed to appeal particularly to boys.
- For the most part, the provision for students who have fallen behind or who need extra help to keep up is stronger in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.
- The provision to promote the use and development of literacy skills across subjects is developing well.

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

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory.

- Teamwork is strong and the teachers are keen to improve. The useful staff handbook and the timetable for monitoring work in English and for team meetings ensure that they know what is expected of them.
- You and the deputy headteacher take a keen interest in the subject and have provided good support for the monitoring of teaching and to enable the head of department to develop leadership and management skills.
- Management of the subject has improved as a result of good use of assessment data to keep track of how well students are doing and to inform subject planning. All the indications are that the subject is in a good position to continue this improvement.

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

- improving achievement, with particular attention to students' progress in Key Stage 3 and the progress of boys, the more able students, and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- strengthening teaching further so that all is consistently at least good.

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

**Pat Kime**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**