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Mr S Busby
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Dear Mr Busby

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 9 June 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 five lessons and two guided reading sessions.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been well above average since 2009. Exceptionally high standards in reading, 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 and writing throughout the key stage. The school is working to increase the number of pupils who achieve the higher levels of attainment.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading and writing is exceptionally high with consistently well above average outcomes at the end of Year 2 since 2009. Standards in speaking and listening are also outstanding.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communications, language and literacy that are below those expected for

their age. They make good progress. By the time they transfer to Key Stage 1, pupils achieve and many exceed expected levels in these areas. The school is developing links with the pre-school provision on the school site, to encourage good early language development. However, there is more to be done to ensure that children are supported to improve their early literacy skills and to use these skills in a range of situations.

- There are no underperforming groups and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress relative to their starting points. This is because their needs are met through the provision of highly personalised and effective support.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of English lessons. Their very good behaviour and strong relationships enable them to work together well and enjoy their learning.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is outstanding.

- The teaching observed was never less than good. Teachers make good use of assessment data to plan their lessons so that activities meet the ages and abilities of the pupils. Teachers have high expectations to which pupils eagerly aspire. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils demonstrated a very good understanding of adverbs and were keen to share their descriptions with one another during one lesson observed.
- 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. Pupils are confident in their responses and throughout the school their speaking and listening skills are a strength.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. 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 strengthen new learning.
- Pupils' work is accurately marked with detailed and helpful guidance which is used effectively by pupils to enable them to improve their learning. Success steps, leading towards targets, are consistently used to support improvements in writing. Nevertheless, a greater degree of independence in learning would enable more able pupils to reach higher levels of attainment in writing.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to ensure that it is broad, balanced and meets the wide-ranging needs and interests of all the pupils. The teaching of phonics is well established and reading and writing tasks

cover a wide range of genres, with a strong emphasis on opportunities for extended writing.

- Key aspects, such as poetry, drama and media work, are fully integrated into the curriculum, providing an interesting and exciting range of activities. For example, Year 6 pupils work on cinquain poems using dance, drama, art and media which provides them with a rich and varied experience during their last year in primary school. The final public performance of this play is being shared in the local town square.
- Cross-curricular links are strong. For instance, in history, the study of refugees provides very effectively for a range of reading and written work. In addition, texts are used well to raise questions and develop discussions, such as the consideration of prejudice and discrimination in David McKee's book 'Tusk Tusk'. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are good, for example through visiting authors, trips and regular performances.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is outstanding.

- Senior leaders have a very clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in English and there is a common commitment to high standards and driving improvement. This is because effective systems are in place to monitor pupils' learning and monitor their progress, and these lead to challenging but achievable targets.
- Senior leaders are aware of the impact of the low levels of literacy, language and communication skills of the youngest children when they begin school and effective plans are in place to enrich the language of pre-school children.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the level of independence particularly for higher achieving pupils to enable them to reach higher levels of attainment in writing
- developing more effective links with pre-schools and supporting providers to increase the level of early communication, language and literacy skills of the youngest children within the community.

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

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector