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14 June 2011

Miss K Prescott  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Prescott

### **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 24 May 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

#### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Pupils start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities in communication, language and literacy that are generally below those expected for their age. During their seven years in school, they make good progress and by the end of Year 6, most attain standards in line with the national average. In 2010, more pupils reached the higher Level 5 than is found nationally.
- The youngest children generally make good progress in learning their letters and sounds, though not all attain the levels expected for four- and five-year-olds. Boys do not attain as well as girls. The school has recognised this and is adapting the curriculum to meet boys' learning needs more effectively.
- Pupils' progress over the last three years is good. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. The school has a good

system for identifying pupils who are falling behind their peers and senior leaders provide additional support, which is enabling these pupils to achieve as well as their peers.

- Pupils' progress in lessons observed was good. This is in line with the school's own monitoring, which suggests that pupils in Year 6 will reach their challenging targets in the national assessments. Pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well. They take pride in their work, particularly their creative writing which is on display in classrooms and around the school.

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

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teaching observed during the inspection was either satisfactory or good. Teachers engaged pupils well. Lessons were lively and interesting, with a good range of activities. In most lessons pupils were active; however, where teaching was satisfactory, pupils spent too long on the carpet and became inattentive.
- Most lessons have a good focus on speaking and listening. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils used props of headscarves, quills, umbrellas and wigs to weave a story setting around a character. In small groups, they explored how the character might have felt and features of their lifestyle before writing their stories. Pupils were highly motivated by this approach, as was evident in their extended writing.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. They know what their targets are in English and are clear how to improve their work. Pupils spoken to read regularly and a recent school survey of reading led to changes in the books provided and an increase in the frequency of adults hearing pupils read aloud. This is leading to higher standards in reading across the school.
- Marking is of good quality. There are some excellent examples, where teachers identify pupils' success against individual targets and give clear guidance for their next steps in learning. However, there are some inconsistencies in the correction of spelling and punctuation across the school.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The school is developing a curriculum which matches the interests of the pupils well. It is making good use of interesting themes as a basis for English work. For example, pupils dissected owl pellets and used their findings as the basis for descriptive writing.
- The school makes exceptional use of display to motivate pupils to write. Each classroom has examples of pupils' written work, sometimes hanging on washing lines. All rooms have 'working walls' which pupils refer to for aspects of grammar and information they need to complete their writing.

- The school has recently invested in new reading books to support individual reading. This is leading to rising standards, particularly in the lower part of the school.
- The curriculum to develop pupils' understanding of phonics is supporting their progress adequately. Although pupils practise their letters and sounds daily, the curriculum does not match their different ability levels closely enough. This has led to some younger pupils not making sufficient progress in reading and writing, particularly boys.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- The senior leadership team works together determinedly to drive up pupils' attainment in English, with good success. The ongoing developments to the curriculum, particularly the close attention to improving standards in reading, are supporting this well.
- You and the English coordinator know the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning well. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and plans for improvement are of good quality.
- Staff are trained well to provide programmes designed to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing. They identify any specific additional learning needs which require more specialist support well. However, some inconsistency in the teaching of spelling and phonics is resulting in slower progress made by a small minority of pupils, particularly boys.

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

- raising the attainment of boys in reading and writing, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:
  - matching the curriculum for phonics more closely to children's different ability levels
  - ensuring consistency in the teaching of phonics and spelling across 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

**Gill Jones**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**