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Mrs R O'Gara
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs R O'Gara

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 5 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, pupils and the School Improvement Partner; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- A substantial proportion of children enter school below the age-related expectations in communication, language and literacy. In particular, a few children lack speaking and listening skills. In 2010, children made outstanding progress by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach standards that were well above the average for schools in similar areas.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards in reading and writing are average. In 2010, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2c and above in national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in reading and average in writing. However, pupils eligible for free school meals achieved better scores in reading and writing than the national average for this group.

- Pupils make outstanding progress and by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average. Pupils enjoy their English lessons and become confident, respectful speakers and listeners. They actively extend their vocabulary and develop good understanding and skill in using language forms and structures. By Year 6, they are able to reflect knowledgeably and maturely on the quality of their reading and writing.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is outstanding.

- Teaching and learning in observed lessons were at least good and some were outstanding. Lessons are imaginative, well-structured and fun for pupils. Well-trained teaching assistants and learning mentors play a highly effective role in leading small groups of pupils.
- Independent writing is successfully taught through carefully planned learning activities which are led with clear and expert guidance, supported by stimulating resources. The impressive way in which teachers show pupils how to write, by writing themselves and commenting on the process, provides a highly effective model for pupils to improve their writing skills.
- Pupils enjoy writing because of the excellent opportunities to use their imagination and make up their own stories and poems. Strikingly, one Year 4 girl was able to spontaneously and fluently recite from memory a poem she had written. They enjoy the frequent opportunities for acting and writing in role. They enjoy reading and value the encouragement given by staff.
- High-quality marking provides regular and personal feedback on specific strengths and areas for development and pupils are confident to identify what they need to improve. Pupils are assessed rigorously and teachers evaluate their progress each term against ambitious targets.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The English curriculum is very carefully linked to the learning needs of each class and to the abilities of different groups. It is supported by an extensive range of opportunities to experience poetry, drama and media. Daily phonics sessions successfully enable younger pupils to build their skills in reading systematically. The strong emphasis on creativity and choice enables pupils to develop confidence and independence in their own writing.
- Pupils are inspired by their frequent encounters with authors, poets, cartoonists and theatre groups. They make many visits to theatres and other cultural venues and enjoy school plays. The school gained an award for 'the most children visiting Salford libraries'.
- All teaching and support staff run English booster activities outside lesson time to accelerate progress in reading and writing. The school leads gifted

and talented activities locally and provides challenging and exciting English programmes with pupils from other schools. A new initiative to provide additional support for pupils who arrive in school with weak speaking and listening skills is at an early stage of implementation.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is outstanding.

- The clear vision and outstanding leadership provided by the Literacy Co-ordinator and other senior leaders successfully communicate high expectations to pupils and staff. The leaders have developed a strong team approach to literacy. One leads a writing programme both in the school and for the local authority. Another lead teacher in English has changed classes to accelerate the progress of a group that had fallen behind. This exemplifies the strategic and proactive approach to the deployment of staff which maximises the number of well-trained adults working with pupils and ensures outstanding achievement by the end of Year 6.
- School self-evaluation accurately assesses strengths and areas for development. Action is taken promptly when issues are identified and any underachievement by individuals or groups is tackled effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- successfully implementing the new initiative to support pupils who arrive in school with weak speaking and listening skills.

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

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector