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Mrs S Findlay-Cobb
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Findlay-Cobb

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 11 July 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 parts of six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently well above average in the past and this positive trend has been maintained with the current group. Particularly impressive is the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment in both reading and writing. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good overall, although the school recognises the need to accelerate progress in reading in the middle years. Speaking and listening are a strength throughout the key stage because of the frequent opportunities that pupils are given to discuss and analyse their work.
- Over recent years, attainment in Key Stage 1 has been well below average in writing and average in reading. However, significant changes to the curriculum, teaching and leadership have resulted in a rapid improvement

in both areas. Achievement is now securely good, although too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with variable skills in communications, language and literacy. On entry, the current group had skills slightly below that expected for their age. They have made good progress in linking sounds to letters and in using language for communicating and thinking, although their skills in reading and writing remain slightly below expected levels for their age.
- The school closely monitors, and supports effectively pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and responds rapidly to emerging issues. Consequently, such pupils make good progress relative to their starting points.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The teaching observed was good throughout the school because imaginative planning was meeting the needs of all pupils effectively and inspiring them to be enthusiastic readers and writers. Teachers have high expectations and a consistent strength is the quality of questioning which challenges pupils effectively to think carefully and logically. The pace of learning is good overall, although in some lessons pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in phonics, and this is reflected in recent improvements in the progress made by younger pupils in reading and writing. A particular strength throughout the school is the way in which information and communication technology is used to support teaching and learning.
- Systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress are well established, accurate and are informing the planning of lessons effectively so that they meet pupils' varying needs and abilities. Marking is good because it provides clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are aware of their targets and are increasingly involved in assessing their own work against task-specific success criteria, for example through the use of marking ladders.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The planning and structure of the curriculum are exceptionally well designed to ensure that key skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening are progressively developed within a range of exciting and innovative activities. The strong focus placed on writing for a range of purposes is resulting in rapidly improving standards throughout the school. The use of information and communication technology to enhance the curriculum and challenge pupils is especially effective, for example through

very imaginative animated films and radio plays, the use of electronic homework links and a high-quality online school newspaper.

- Clear links are made across the curriculum with all aspects of English. For example, pupils wrote excellent Haiku poems on the Spanish Armada which helped them to appreciate the deprivations of life onboard an Elizabethan sailing ship. A well-planned programme of curriculum enrichment activities further encourages pupils' enthusiasm for English through such activities as video conferences with authors, theatre visits, performances and themed weeks.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is outstanding.

- Very effective leadership and management at all levels have ensured that past underachievement is being addressed and that strengths are being further built on. There is a whole-school commitment to drive improvement and this is underpinning the school's outstanding capacity to improve further. The very effective monitoring of teaching and assessment is accurately informing the school's self-evaluation and strategic improvement planning. This is resulting in a rapidly improving provision and outcomes. Governors are exceptionally well informed about progress in English, for example through reports on specific areas such as on the writing standards of vulnerable groups.
- The high standards that all staff and pupils strive to achieve are reflected in the learning environment throughout both sites. For example, displays effectively focus not only on celebrating high-quality writing outcomes, but also on illustrating the range of writing genres and the process of writing itself.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 1.

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