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Mrs K Field
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Dear Mrs Field

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 4 October 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 six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- All groups of pupils enjoy English, take care with their work and make good progress because lessons interest them and are well matched to their needs.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 has improved and is now average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points, which in many cases are well below average. Changes to the curriculum and teaching approaches have narrowed the gap in attainment between boys and girls and improved writing, although there is further to go.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 remains below average. The school is taking effective steps to improve skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Both

boys and girls are responding very well, but it is too early to see significant improvement.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Strengths of teaching seen widely in observed lessons include lively and varied activities which engage pupils well. Lessons often start excitingly: teachers use interesting texts, images, props and scenarios to stimulate adventurous use of language. Lessons are well structured to move learning forward. Teachers make sure resources are adapted to help every pupil learn. Modern technology is used well, sometimes by the pupils, to demonstrate English skills.
- Teachers successfully involve pupils in understanding how to do their work well, for example by having them explain what they have learnt so far and need to do next. Pupils know what they need to do to reach their regularly reviewed individual targets, especially in writing. Targets for reading or speaking and listening are less clearly understood. There were examples of teachers using their subject knowledge well to give pupils helpfully precise feedback on their spoken and written work. Pupils know the teacher will check that that they have acted on guidance.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught daily in a systematic, well-paced and enjoyable way. Pupils then use their new skills in relevant contexts.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities for contributing their own ideas and discussing their views with different partners. Occasionally, however, teachers do more of the talking than pupils. Opportunities are missed to extend their speaking and listening skills.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- Teachers plan schemes of work which build pupils' skills in different areas of English systematically, and in a good variety of contexts. Pupils respond well to thematic plans and the increasing use of drama and scenarios. Teachers involve pupils in shaping plans for learning and boys' and girls' interests are well reflected. A good range of classic and popular texts is shared and pupils regularly write substantial pieces.
- Provision for communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Excellent use is made of good resources to encourage children to use language and enjoy books. Children in the Reception class were fascinated by role play with *Willy Wonka* and using detective equipment to hunt for spies and, as a result, their talk and sociable play blossomed.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- Senior leaders work well together as a team to fulfil a clear plan to improve attainment in English. They express a clear vision for the subject which they are sharing effectively with the staff. It is based on strong self-evaluation and is well-informed about good practice in English.
- The subject leader has transformed provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is having a positive influence on English teaching across the age range, well supported by her colleagues. Teachers are enthusiastic and keen to do their best.
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation and clear, supportive expectations have improved the quality of learning and pupils' progress. The governing body is well involved and has invested in well-focused staff training, new resources and time for staff to work in pairs to improve their teaching. For example, training about the genres of writing and how to teach them, led by school staff, has helped teachers' subject knowledge and contributed to rising confidence among pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - consolidating new approaches to accelerating progress in reading and writing from the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards
 - checking that the curriculum and teaching promote good progress in speaking and listening.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Susan Bowles
Her Majesty's Inspector