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Mrs P A Midgeley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Midgeley

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 27 September 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; a learning walk; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with the national average. Writing standards have been weaker than reading in recent years but improved considerably in the Year 6 tests for 2011.
- Children's skills and knowledge are below average on entry to the school. Progress in English has been consistently good over recent years. Boys do as well as girls. There are no significant discrepancies in progress between the different groups of pupils although the school has identified some issues about the performance of boys who are eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well, settle to work quickly and try hard. Many are keen to contribute to class and pair

discussions although some pupils struggle to express their ideas clearly and, where appropriate, in Standard English.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Pupils enjoy English lessons. They like the variety, the opportunities to be creative, and their involvement in discussions and group work. They are stimulated by a good range of interesting tasks and activities.
- The school acknowledges some variability in the quality of teaching. The strengths of lessons observed include: good relationships and classroom management; effective support by teaching assistants that enabled pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the mainstream curriculum; lively and enthusiastic teaching; and regular opportunities for pupils to share ideas.
- In the lessons observed, there were times when pupils' progress was constrained by learning objectives that were not sufficiently specific or when planning did not focus clearly enough on the outcomes for pupils.
- Assessment is good. The approach to sharing and reviewing curricular targets with pupils and parents is systematic. This helps pupils to know their targets well. Marking is often meticulous and well-judged, giving pupils helpful feedback on their next steps although comments too rarely reinforce targets previously set by teachers.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- In general, the curriculum is broadly conventional, following the guidance of the National Strategy and based around the study of genres. There are, however, particular strengths in reading. Guided reading is implemented systematically with good monitoring of progress, pupils enjoy reading whole-class texts with their teacher, and the school works hard to engage parents in supporting their children's reading.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. In the most effective classrooms, there is good use of drama and information and communication technology to engage pupils. Although discussion happens routinely in lessons, especially through the use of 'talk partners', there is too little explicit planning and teaching of speaking and listening skills.
- The curriculum is enhanced by the use of special events such as a Writing Day and Reading Week. Pupils' literacy skills are also developed through cross-curricular links and frequent school trips. Drama has been promoted well through the work of an actor with older children, school productions, and visiting theatre groups although few pupils have been taken to the theatre.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- The school has maintained good levels of progress in English in recent years. It identified weaknesses in pupils' writing and put in place a detailed action plan to address the issue. This led to higher standards of writing in the national tests in 2011.
- Senior leaders have a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses in English. Self-evaluation is accurate. It is informed by a good range of monitoring activities including lesson observations, work and planning scrutinies, and feedback from pupils. Lesson observations have often been jointly conducted to standardise judgements.
- The school development plan has a clear focus on further improvements to teaching and learning across the school. This includes exploration of what makes an outstanding lesson and good opportunities for teachers to work together and share ideas and good practice informally.
- Pupils' progress is monitored effectively and this leads to well-managed intervention for particular pupils. There is good emphasis on early intervention and improving reading.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the consistency of teaching through the use of specific and well-targeted learning objectives in lessons and planning that focuses on outcomes in English for pupils
- developing a more systematic approach to teaching speaking and listening skills.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As 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

Philip Jarrett
Her Majesty's Inspector