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Ms S Porter  
Acting Headteacher  
Caldmore Community Primary School  
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Dear Ms Porter

### **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 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 five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Children enter the Nursery with poorly developed skills in English. Most make rapid progress in learning phonics, though fewer learn to apply these skills to reading and writing. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, skills in communication, language and literacy are higher than in similar areas although they remain below the national average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 1 and standards in reading have risen over the last three years. Skills in writing are less securely developed.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, good progress ensures that the proportion of pupils gaining at least Level 4 is average. However, fewer pupils than average gain the higher Level 5.

## **Quality of teaching in English**

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Pupils enjoy the teaching of phonics and acquiring the skills to read and write. Pupils in mixed-age groups concentrate and respond well to challenges that are accurately targeted at their level. The sequence of reading and writing activities is well-paced and systematically builds skills through a well-planned variety of activities, including physical actions. Teaching and support staff are well trained and enunciate letter sounds accurately with good individual and choral participation by pupils. Pupils' progress in developing phonic skills is assessed accurately and frequently, and is used effectively to inform and adjust daily teaching sessions.
- Teachers' good planning and positive relationships create a healthy classroom environment in which pupils develop confidence in spoken language and extend their vocabulary. The explanations and modelling of English sentence structures by teaching and support staff are effective in guiding reading and in extending pupils' ability to compose speech and writing accurately. Talk and structured activities are used well to develop pupils' thinking and their independent learning skills. Some teaching lacks the more creative opportunities that help pupils to extend their self-expression in talk and writing.
- Pupils are well-informed about their levels and progress. Older pupils in particular have an accurate understanding of how to improve specific aspects of their English. Marking is constructive but, on occasion, could be more specific in the praise and targets for improvement. Assessment is used effectively to monitor progress against targets. The school has begun to implement a more rigorous system of identifying needs, intervening with particular individuals and reviewing the impact of actions.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The phonics programme has contributed significantly to the acceleration in pupils' progress in acquiring the basic skills of literacy. The programme is well-organised, well-targeted and regularly monitored.
- Pupils enjoy reading because they develop the skills to read and are given good encouragement to read for pleasure both at school and at home with parents and carers. At school they have good access to information and communication technology for writing and research. Opportunities to visit the theatre, meet authors, and visit a university broaden their experience and develop their skills in language and literature. The school is at an early stage of developing the more creative aspects of the curriculum. Plans are in place to further extend the opportunities to develop talk to support writing, and to develop research and imaginative writing in other subjects.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- Leaders and managers have successfully developed the use of phonics teaching to improve standards in reading. Detailed planning, effective staff development and close monitoring of practice have ensured that the phonics programme has had a good impact. It has resulted in fewer pupils at Key Stage 2 needing additional support for reading and writing.
- Self-evaluation in English is clear-sighted and accurately identifies success, areas for improvement and the actions to be taken. Plans are in place to improve the rigour of pupil monitoring and to strengthen the links between the management of staff performance and pupils' progress.

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

- further improving attainment and progress at all key stages, especially in writing and at the higher levels by:
  - ensuring that pupils have more creative and inspiring opportunities to talk and write
  - fully implementing the new system for monitoring pupils' progress, tackling underachievement and evaluating impact.

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

**Bernard Campbell**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**