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Mrs L Lowes  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Lowes

### **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 19 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 four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment has been consistently above average at the end of Key Stage 2 for the last four years. In 2011, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was significantly above that found nationally. Boys' overall attainment in 2011 was higher than girls. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. They are able to articulate their thoughts and ideas clearly.
- At Key Stage 1, attainment in reading and writing has been above the national average for the last five years. In 2011, boys' attainment was above that of the girls in reading and writing. Progress through Key Stage 1 in both reading and writing is good. In speaking and listening, pupils display skills that are above that expected for their age.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communications, language and literacy that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress. By the time they transfer to Key Stage 1, pupils achieve and many exceed expected levels in these areas.
- The quality of pupils' learning in lessons is good. Pupils behave well and find lessons interesting and engaging. They particularly enjoy the good range of opportunities provided to improve their writing.

### **Quality of teaching in English**

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Relationships are good and pupils respond well to effective teacher questioning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards in their work. They use a range of teaching styles to engage learners who respond well. In one lesson observed, the teacher encouraged pupils to visualise an imaginary scene. Pupils responded very well and produced some insightful descriptions of the place they captured in their mind.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and usually gives them advice on how to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across all year groups.
- Pupils have very positive views about their learning in English lessons. Teachers plan lessons which are interesting and activities, particularly collaborative groupwork, are used well to encourage pupils to engage in discussions and assess their own learning. Teaching assistant support is well targeted and effective.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is well-planned to meet the needs and interests of pupils. A cross-curricular approach is used to good effect, ensuring that pupils' literacy skills are developed in a range of subjects. The recently introduced theme books encourage pupils to maintain high standards of writing across the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to listen to stories or novels read to them by the class teacher. Many pupils read regularly at home and have a good knowledge of authors and texts.
- Pupils' learning in English is enhanced by a good range of visits and enrichment activities including visits to the theatre and local places of interest. One class recently visited the seaside to 'test' out the boats they had made in design technology. This experience provided a good stimulus for their writing about 'Journeys'.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- You are currently providing a strong sense of purpose and direction to work in English during the leave of the substantive English subject leader. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and correctly identifies the most important areas for improvement. However, at present English policies do not include the most up-to-date changes to assessment practice in reading and writing. In addition, although the school development plan has clear areas for improvement, no clear criteria by which the success of actions will be measured have been identified.
- There are robust systems in place for monitoring pupils' progress. Attainment has been consistently above the national average and the capacity for further improvement in English is good.

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

- identifying clear, measurable success criteria which focus on pupils' outcomes in strategic planning
- updating English policies to reflect the recent improvements in assessment
- ensuring that the school's best practice in marking and feedback to pupils is consistent across the school, to enable all pupils to know how to improve their work.

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

**Ann Henderson**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**