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Mrs Gettel
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gettel

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 January 2012 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.

- Pupils' overall attainment in English is above average. A high proportion of the current Year 6 pupils have already exceeded the level of attainment expected by the end of the year, especially in reading.
- Throughout the school, attainment is higher in reading than writing.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, reading, and writing. In all the classes, pupils are making gains in their learning at a faster than average rate. Many of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language are now doing particularly well.
- Pupils are well behaved in English lessons and their good attitudes to learning support their achievement.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Pupils' good achievement shows that they benefit from teaching that is at least good. The lessons observed were generally taught well and some teaching was of an outstanding quality.
- Staff have positive relationships with pupils. They plan interesting lessons, which pupils enjoy, and they deploy support staff effectively. The most effective teaching observed was characterised by: strong subject knowledge; very high expectations for all pupils; skilful tailoring of the work to match the full range of pupils' learning needs; and very effective assessment of pupils' learning during the lesson.
- Minor shortcomings undermined the effectiveness of some lessons. For example, teachers sometimes talked too much. As a result, opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills were missed or the time for concentrated effort on their work was reduced.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum in English is carefully planned for the mixed-age classes. All aspects of the subject, including poetry, drama and media, receive sufficient attention and the teaching of reading is given high priority.
- Pupils have good planned opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills in other subjects.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visitors including local authors and theatre groups. However, there are few extra-curricular activities in English at present.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- Staff teamwork is strong. There is clear common purpose and a commitment to continuing improvement of performance in English. Staff undertake a good amount of additional training to develop their skills.
- The effectiveness of provision is monitored well by you and the subject leader. You keep a close eye on the quality of provision and pupils' achievement and adjust practice accordingly.
- Plans for the further development of English are based on a careful analysis of pupils' achievement. They give priority to the most important areas for improvement and include clear plans for further improving attainment in writing.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- maintaining the drive to raise attainment in writing further throughout the school by:
 - ensuring sufficient challenge for abler pupils so a higher proportion attains standards above the average expectations for their age
 - further developing the assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills and the use of assessment to inform teaching and planning of the curriculum
 - tailoring work tightly to the varied needs of pupils in each class.

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.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector