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Mr M Bailey
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bailey

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 20 June 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 parts of five 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 average. Standards are higher in reading than writing but the gap has narrowed as a result of effective action. Boys did better than girls last year, in contrast with the national picture, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved higher standards than the national average for that group.
- Progress has been satisfactory in recent years but was at least good in 2011. The school's assessments suggest that achievement will be higher in 2012 with particularly high attainment in reading. Current progress is good overall; this was confirmed by evidence from lessons, work in the pupils' books and discussions with pupils.
- Pupils are very keen to learn. They are polite and friendly. Behaviour is good and pupils work well together. Many are confident in expressing their

ideas and mature in discussion although this not always fully exploited by teachers in lessons. They respond especially well when the work is interactive and challenging.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Relationships are good and pupils are engaged by a good range of lively activities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan and deliver lessons. Good modelling of writing helps pupils to work with a clear understanding of the task. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss ideas before writing and teachers use good-quality literary texts to stimulate discussion.
- In lessons observed, learning objectives were not always effective enough, merely defining the task to be undertaken. Teachers' plans were sometimes more focused around the activities chosen than the learning and progress to be made by pupils in the lesson.
- Assessment is good overall. The best marking is both detailed and very helpful to pupils in identifying the next steps in their learning. The use of separate literacy books and journals works well and leads to a wide range of extended writing across all classes. There is, however, some inconsistency in assessment at present in areas including the quality of marking and feedback, the use of curricular targets and pupils' follow-up to comments, for example, about correcting spelling mistakes.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum tends to follow recent national guidance. It is broad and includes the study of a wide range of genres although many pupils would like to see more opportunities for creative work. Links are made with the topics studied in other subject areas and pupils mostly enjoy these topics.
- Recent actions taken have improved pupils' experience of writing. There are many opportunities for extended writing and effective support from teachers has increased pupils' confidence. Younger pupils are confident to experiment with writing and pupils show good stamina and concentration as a result of developments in teaching and the curriculum.
- Some pupils lack enthusiasm for reading although they enjoy the class novels chosen by teachers. The school is working to develop a more consistent approach to guided reading. Although reading at home is encouraged, the quality of monitoring varies from class to class. The library is being developed and contains a good range of texts although it remains underused at present by pupils for reading and research.
- Intervention programmes support pupils' work well in identified areas of weakness such as phonics and handwriting. There are drama and reading clubs and the school is seeking to develop the range of its enrichment activities.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is good.

- There is a good sense of direction to English work at present. Recent actions include an enhanced role for the subject leader, focused training on guided reading and subject coordination, and an emphasis on improving attainment in English through improved teaching. Achievement improved last year in English and this upward trend looks set to continue. Capacity for further improvement is good.
- The subject leader works with a group of teachers who are able to provide expertise across the different key stages. She is increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluation activities through data analysis and well-planned work scrutinies. You have worked with her to provide guidance on observing lessons and ensuring consistency in feedback. This has worked well although the lesson observation form used is too much focused on teaching rather than learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the consistency of teaching by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned more effectively around the learning and progress of pupils and based on well-chosen learning objectives
 - sharing existing good practice in marking and feedback to raise standards across all classes
- improving pupils' enjoyment of reading by:
 - developing greater consistency in approaches to guided reading
 - closer monitoring of pupils' home reading
 - extending pupils' use of the library.

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