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Mr D Lamoon  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lamoon

### **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 31 January 2013 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 the observation of five part lessons which were all carried out jointly with either the headteacher or the English subject leader.

The overall effectiveness of English requires improvement.

### **Achievement in English**

Achievement in English requires improvement.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English has declined in recent years and was below the national average in 2012. However, in writing, pupils' attainment was above all pupils nationally. Boys' attainment was below that of the girls in reading and writing but boys' attainment in writing was above boys' average nationally. Current attainment is variable across year groups.
- The school's own tracking data show that pupils' progress in reading and writing is inconsistent. Not enough pupils are making or exceeding expected progress. Recently introduced initiatives in writing, which provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length, are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in writing.

- Pupils say they enjoy English lessons. They generally behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They particularly like the topic-based approach to the curriculum, which includes drama and role play.

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

The quality of teaching in English requires improvement.

- Most teaching engages pupils well, because teaching moves at a good pace and activities are suitably planned to actively involve pupils in pairs and groups to discuss their learning. But this is not always the case; sometimes lessons do not include all pupils sufficiently well, resulting in some off task behaviour which impedes pupils' progress.
- The quality of lesson planning is variable. The most effective plans are detailed, with tasks which are suitably matched to the differing learning needs of all groups of pupils. However, some lesson planning does not make sufficient use of assessment information to plan interesting and challenging tasks, and this limits pupils' progress.
- Recent improvements in assessment procedures are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' understanding of their levels of attainment and their next steps in learning. The quality of marking and feedback following pupils' writing is also a strength. Pupils understand the highlighted marking, which provides them with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

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

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. There are good links to other subjects in the curriculum, making learning relevant and meaningful. The whole-school focus on dinosaurs this term, which was clearly evident during the inspection, excited and enthused pupils and is relevant to all ages.
- Pupils enjoy the regular opportunities to write at length across a range of genres. This has engaged all pupils, and particularly boys, in writing well. The impact of this is evident in the most recent assessments.
- The school is also focussing on improving reading skills. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and enjoy reading at home and at school, borrowing books regularly from the school library and the visiting library bus.
- There is a good range of additional opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences in English. Regular visits to the theatre, visiting story tellers and links to the academy partnership and university serve to increase pupils' understanding and enjoyment.

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

The effectiveness of leadership in and management of English requires improvement.

- The newly appointed English subject leader has a clear focus on improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of all pupils. Both the headteacher and the English subject leader are committed to improving attainment and progress in English.
- English subject plans and policies have clear aims which help to provide good direction for future improvements, some of which are already in place and beginning to impact positively on pupils' attitudes and enjoyment, particularly in writing. These improvements clearly indicate there is a good capacity for further improvement. However, some improvements are very recent and have not yet had time to take full effect on improving levels of attainment and rates of pupils' progress.
- Leaders and managers systematically monitor the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Professional development is planned well to increase the skills of teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching is evaluated to identify the progress made by pupils.

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

- Improving the consistency in the quality of teaching so that all teaching is at least good and rates of pupils' progress increase by:
  - using assessment information more sharply to plan lessons that meet the learning needs of all pupils
  - ensuring the pace and challenge of work appropriately engage all pupils in their learning
  - improving the use of collaborative group work to develop pupils' understanding and their active participation during lessons.

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 academy sponsor.

Yours sincerely

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