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Mr D Smith
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Dear Mr Smith

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 observation of five lessons, a specialist dance lesson and a literacy intervention session.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Pupils' attainment in reading and writing has been above average for the past three years and pupils make good progress in lessons overall. Due to an engaging curriculum and active teaching and learning strategies, the progress of boys is improving. Effective intervention programmes are improving the progress of low-achieving pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants support these pupils well in lessons.
- Pupils demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Pupils particularly enjoy discussion, creative writing and reading a wide range of books. They develop confidence and independence in their learning through applying a range of literacy skills and helping each other to improve their work. Some pupils

continue to find writing difficult because they do not have sufficient strategies to help them to spell words.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The quality of teaching is typically good, and there are examples of outstanding practice. Key features include positive relationships that promote pupils' confident contribution to lessons, a variety of teaching styles, engaging resources including interactive whiteboards and electronic notebooks, and a brisk pace to learning.
- The use of assessment in lessons, including pupils' targets and success criteria, promotes good progress. The marking of pupils' work is becoming increasingly effective, and there is some exemplary practice in Year 5. In an outstanding lesson in Year 6, the teacher constantly assessed the progress of all pupils and adapted the lesson, often providing more challenge, to make sure that each pupil was progressing as much as possible. Learning objectives are not always clear in lesson plans or adapted to meet the range of levels of achievement in each class.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum is dynamic and includes exploring books through art, dance, drama and the media. Pupils see the relevance of developing literacy skills through a variety of topics, visits and visitors, for example in working with The Royal Shakespeare Company and visiting the Cheltenham Literature Festival. They gain confidence by taking the lead in activities, for instance preparing for a school literature festival, and in developing skills to help them become successful learners.
- High quality displays of pupils' work show that very good attention is given to speaking and listening, reading and writing. The displays include an interview with an expert composter as part of an ecology project, the designing of settings for Roald Dahl's 'Danny The Champion of the World', research on the Tudors following a visit to Hampton Court Palace, and creative writing based on the topic of extreme environments and work outside in the school's woodland area, known as the forest school.

Effectiveness of leadership in and management of English

The effectiveness of leadership in and management of English is good.

- Good subject leadership provides clear direction for improving English further. Policies and guidance, for example on marking pupils' work and what a literacy lesson in the school should contain, are helping to secure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. This is further enhanced by pupils acting as 'learning detectives' and telling their peers about what they have seen working well in other classes.

- Rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the progress of individuals and groups of pupils inform subject development planning and further progress. The same rigour is not applied to teachers' lesson plans.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' lesson plans to ensure that they promote equally good and better progress for all pupils
- support for pupils in developing spelling strategies.

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

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector