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19 February 2013

Mr J Croker
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Croker

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 18 February 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; a learning walk and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communication and language and literacy on or slightly below those expected for their age, although many have skills in listening and attention that are above expectations. They make better than expected progress, especially in reading, and almost all meet or exceed expected levels by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1.
- This excellent start is built upon in Key Stage 1 and pupils consistently attain significantly above the national average in reading and writing. They also demonstrate outstanding speaking and listening skills. Although the result of last year's phonics screening (linking letters with the sounds that they make) was similar to that of other schools nationally, this is not reflected in pupils' attainment in reading, which is exceptionally high. Nevertheless, the school has taken very effective action to raise standards further in phonics and early reading in Key Stage 1 and across the school.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently and significantly above the national average. The school has very high

expectations and recognised the need to raise standards further in writing across Key Stage 2. Consequently, very effective strategies have been introduced and inspection evidence confirms that standards have rapidly improved in writing, especially boys', over the past two years. In the current Year 6, pupils have made excellent progress and are on track to exceed the expected levels in reading and writing. This very positive picture is reflected throughout the key stage. Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening and reading are exceptional and standards of handwriting and presentation are very high.

- Groups of pupils - such as those with special educational needs, those who qualify for additional government funding ('Pupil Premium') and those who transfer from other schools - make outstanding progress in reading and writing. The school provides effective early interventions, carefully matched to the individual needs of such pupils.

Teaching in English is outstanding.

- Inspection evidence confirms the school's own rigorous monitoring of teaching, which is consistently outstanding in English and underpins pupils' outstanding progress. Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent subject knowledge, especially in phonics, and make very good use of resources, including information and communication technology, to support their teaching. Lessons are very well structured and carefully planned to take account of previous learning and pupils' different abilities. During lessons, highly effective use is made of on-going assessment techniques, such as questioning, which enables teachers to respond rapidly to pupils' emerging needs and to adjust their teaching accordingly.
- The use of highly imaginative and inspirational teaching motivates pupils extremely well and ensures a brisk pace to lessons. This was illustrated during the inspection by the imaginative way in which letters and artefacts were used to introduce a topic on native North Americans and inspire pupils' enthusiasm for writing. Teachers consistently model high standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening and have high expectations of pupils. Teachers' passion for literature is inspiring pupils' enthusiasm for English, so behaviour in lessons is outstanding.
- The use of a range of strategies, for example in linking speaking and listening to writing, is having a very positive impact on raising pupils' achievement in writing, especially that of boys.
- Teachers' marking is of a consistently high standard. Detailed and evaluative comments provide clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. In older classes, pupils often decide on the criteria against which their writing will be assessed; this encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning.

The curriculum in English is outstanding.

- National initiatives have been imaginatively adapted to meet the learning needs of all the pupils in reading, writing, speaking and listening. As a

result, pupils are articulate and confident readers and writers. The curriculum is kept under constant review and provides an exceptionally rich and varied programme which fires pupils' enthusiasm. There is a strong focus on developing literacy skills in all other subjects and a strength is the way in which writing is purposeful and consistently identifies real audiences.

- Programmes in phonics and early reading have been particularly successful, especially for pupils who have achieved less well in previous schools. For example, interventions such as 'Reading Recovery' frequently result in pupils making two years' progress over 20 weeks. Independent reading, writing, speaking and listening are extremely well promoted and skills are systematically developed. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and confident, developing a love of poetry, literature and writing, which is reflected in their high standards of achievement. This rich curriculum is further enhanced by a range of trips, visits and activities. Links are made to music and drama and pupils regularly visit the theatre or have drama groups perform in the school. Children's writers visit the school and children are high achievers in local debating competitions.

Leadership and management of English are outstanding.

- The leadership team has been highly successful in driving improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. This is because, in spite of a history of high achievement, there is no sense of complacency and leaders are passionate about building upon their strengths. They make excellent use of a wide range of accurate assessment and monitoring data to drive improvement and there is clear evidence that already high standards are improving still further across the school.
- Improvement planning is of good quality because it accurately identifies what can be improved further and how it can be improved. However, improvement plans do not always made it sufficiently clear how success will be measured against outcomes for pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening improvement plans so that success criteria are clearly measurable against pupils' outcomes.

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

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector