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Miss C Richards
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Miss Richards

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 7 March 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.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English is good.

- In Reception, pupils make good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage their attainment is above average.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils that met the required standard in the national check on pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds was well above average. Attainment is above average in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1.
- In 2012, attainment dipped from above average to average at the end of Key Stage 2, because disruptions in the teaching of the Year 6 group reduced the progress made by these pupils. School data show that rates of progress have increased in the last two years, especially in Years 5 and

6. The current Year 6 is on track to exceed the nationally expected progress from their starting points at Key Stage 1.

- Pupils engage purposefully in stimulating and well-planned activities which enable them to develop their skills in literacy systematically. They enjoy lessons, generally concentrate well and respond positively to the imaginative challenges they are presented with.

Teaching in English is good.

- Assessment effectively identifies the needs of different abilities. Lessons are planned carefully to meet these different needs. Teachers provide good models of writing to show pupils how to construct a letter or an argument. Learning resources are well designed and practical which helps pupils to develop their writing, step-by-step. Success criteria are used well to direct and check pupils' learning. Teaching assistants lead tasks effectively and use questions well to help pupils work out the answers.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the excellent range of language and literacy activities, including role play, provides a rich stimulus for speaking, reading and writing. The best teaching throughout the school is ambitious and imaginative and provides a high level of challenge. For example, Year 6 pupils adapted and re-wrote a classic poem about a character in order to describe a Shakespearean character. This demonstrated their good knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare plays and developed their appreciation of poetic form and language.
- Marking is good and provides specific comments on the features of language that pupils have used correctly and suggests how they could make improvements. There is some inconsistency in the clarity with which targets for improvement are provided. Pupils do not have regular planned opportunities to correct work in response to teachers' marking.

The curriculum in English is good.

- The World Book Day assembly began with a dramatic reading by a teacher dressed and speaking in role as a giant, which caused great excitement and enjoyment. Many pupils also dressed as story characters. Reading is promoted well through guided reading sessions. The library is well-organised and pupils use it well. The programme for teaching letters and sounds is regular and systematic. Pupils who need extra help with letters and sounds are identified promptly and provided with well-planned support, including computer programmes and paired reading with an older pupil. Workshops for parents have increased their understanding of how to support pupils' reading.
- This year, poetry has been the vehicle for developing higher level reading skills. A 'poe-tree' in the entrance hall displays the poems written by all year groups. Older pupils receive strong encouragement to read classic texts, including Shakespeare and poetry. Pupils have good opportunities

for drama and role play supported by visits from a theatre group. Pupils extend and practise their writing skills through well-considered links with other subjects.

Leadership and management of English are good.

- Leaders communicate a real passion and commitment to developing pupils' skills in English language and their appreciation of literature. This is reflected in the imaginative strategies and resources used to develop pupils' skills in English. The quality of teaching and pupils' work are checked closely and evaluated accurately. Robust action has been taken to tackle weakness in teaching. Staff received training from a poet to develop the poetry theme. Staff provide training in the teaching of letters and sounds for local nursery settings and schools.
- The use of assessment has been refined and is used effectively to identify skills acquired and the next steps in learning. The progress of pupils is regularly reviewed and actions put in place to tackle weaknesses. Support programmes and curriculum innovations are evaluated formally in writing, with measures of impact. Leaders have raised staff expectations of the progress pupils can make. However, the school does not provide sufficient information to pupils about the levels they are at and the target levels they could achieve.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing more information to pupils about the levels they are at and the target levels they could achieve
- identifying the targets for improvement in marking more clearly and consistently and providing more opportunities for pupils to make corrections in response to teachers' marking.

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

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector