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14 March 2013

Mr P Croke
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Dear Mr Croke

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 1 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 four lessons and of the teaching of basic skills across the school.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Attainment in English by the end of Key Stage 2 has been above average for the past three years. Standards in reading are above average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils read widely and can discuss favourite authors.
- Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points, which are below average, although progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as rapid as in the rest of the school. There is no significant variation in achievement between groups of pupils due to the school's rigorous monitoring of progress and support for individuals at risk of underachieving. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs exceed their expected levels of progress.

- Pupils are eager to learn. They work exceptionally well in a range of groups and take responsibility for organising and improving their work. For example, in a lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils edited a partner's work and suggested more interesting sentences including the use of adverbial phrases. These pupils read with children in the Reception class.

Teaching in English is outstanding.

- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and plan work according to the stage they are at, rather than their age group, in the mixed-age classes. They model new skills very effectively on interactive whiteboards and give pupils opportunities to apply their new learning independently. Pupils are motivated by the use of resources, including computers and film clips, and are fully engaged in working collaboratively on imaginative activities. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Some, though not all, teachers ask probing questions to deepen the understanding of more able pupils.
- Pupils know how to improve their work and reach their target levels because they are given specific guidance in curricular targets and through teachers' marking of their work. They use the descriptors for each level to assess their own work and that of others. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to help low-achieving pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to progress as well as their peers.

The curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes. It provides a variety of opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing in cross-curricular topics and in discrete literacy lessons. Pupils use computers for research, writing blogs, making presentations to the class and for emailing penfriends in a school in Australia. Phonics lessons, based on letters and sounds, are well resourced. Pupils progress from a reading scheme to reading a wide range of books in an accelerated reading programme. The boys in particular enjoy completing an on-line quiz on the books read. All pupils engage in extended writing each week, working on the principle of 'think, talk and write', and they produce a very wide range of texts across subjects.
- A special feature of the curriculum is the daily basic skills lesson in all classes. It includes activities to develop language skills, punctuation, spelling, handwriting and numeracy. It successfully fills gaps in pupils' learning.
- The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities and clubs, including drama productions.

Leadership and management of English are outstanding.

- Subject leadership promotes a culture of high expectations with an emphasis on developing resilience and independence in learning. Clear direction is provided through development planning, policies and procedures, such as the marking policy, that are followed consistently by

all staff. Regular lesson observations identify relevant areas for development and support. As a result, teaching is never less than consistently good with much that is outstanding.

- The capacity for further improvement is strong. The school's data indicate that standards continue to rise, with a higher proportion of pupils on track to attain the highest levels this year. Strategies to monitor and evaluate provision for English include lesson observations, checking teachers' planning and pupils' work, and analysis of progress information and questionnaires completed by pupils. This self-evaluation is used to inform priorities in planning. Effective action is taken, for example to stretch the more able pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage in line with the rest of the school.

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