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Mrs J Box  
Headteacher  
Edgebury Primary School  
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Chislehurst  
BR7 6BL

Dear Mrs Box

### **Ofsted 2013–14 subject survey inspection programme: English**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 29 January 2014 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 eight lessons.

### **The overall effectiveness of English is good.**

#### **Achievement in English is good.**

- The standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in 2013 were above average in reading and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Attainment in writing was broadly average overall, although forty per cent of pupils gained Level 5 in writing. This is above the proportion seen nationally.
- The school's focus on improving the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of pupils who have met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils make good progress in reading across the school and standards in reading have improved year on year.
- Although standards in writing have also improved over the past three years at Key Stage 1, pupils tend to make less progress in writing than reading. This area is a focus for improvement across the school. Teachers now ensure that writing has a high priority right from the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in the Reception class have plenty of

opportunities to write both formally and informally. For example, they have 'space logs' to fill in when they are at play in their 'space capsule' role-play area and they regularly practise their writing skills, working in small groups with their teacher.

- Close investigation by senior staff has shown that some groups, such as boys, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium, tend to make less progress in writing than their classmates. School leaders have increased the rigour of procedures to track the progress of pupils and this ensures that underachievement is spotted quickly. The latest information on pupils' progress indicates that the situation is improving and progress is more even for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and most can express their ideas clearly both orally and in writing. They contribute readily to discussion and say that they enjoy English lessons.

### **Teaching in English is good.**

- Teachers have a good knowledge of children's literature and use a wide range of classic and contemporary texts with their pupils. They are enthusiastic about reading and communicate a love of books to their pupils.
- Teachers structure lessons carefully. As a result, in the majority of lessons learning builds logically and pupils' understanding is developed well. Pupils learn new skills, practise them with the teacher's support and then apply their knowledge independently. This builds their confidence.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to write in lessons, but some make too much use of mini whiteboards and pens, so that there is no permanent record of pupils' writing in a lesson. In these classes, work in books appears sparse.
- A new format for writing targets have been introduced quite recently and are not yet used consistently by all staff. However, all pupils know what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils receive useful feedback from teachers about the quality of their written work. However, marking of incorrect spelling and handwriting is less consistent. As a result, some pupils repeatedly make the same spelling mistakes in their work and others habitually form letters incorrectly when writing.
- The school makes good use of teaching assistants who have specialist skills in supporting pupils with specific needs, such as those with dyslexia or speech and communication difficulties. This helps to ensure that these pupils do not fall behind their classmates.

### **The curriculum in English is good.**

- The curriculum is engaging for pupils because it is designed around their interests, but it also gives proper attention to the development of basic

literacy skills. Younger pupils have discrete lessons on phonics and older pupils are taught grammar and punctuation.

- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects such as history and geography. They ensure that pupils read widely and experience a variety of non-fiction texts and poetry as well as story books.
- The school has taken effective action to review its curriculum for English in advance of the implementation of the new national guidance.
- All staff are confident in using electronic equipment such as visualisers and interactive whiteboards and make good use of video and online texts to enhance learning in English.
- Weekly lessons with a visiting drama coach provide enjoyable opportunities for pupils to participate in role-play activities, but do not ensure that pupils' speaking and listening skills progress and develop systematically as they move through the school.

### **Leadership and management of English are good.**

- The subject leader is very knowledgeable and experienced and works closely with the headteacher and other senior leaders in the school as a valued member of the senior leadership team.
- She makes good use of regular visits to classrooms and checks of pupils' work and progress to monitor the quality of the school's provision in English and has a good understanding of what is going well and what still needs to be improved.
- The quality of the subject development plan has greatly improved this year so that it is clearly focused on improving areas of relative weakness.
- The subject leader's strong classroom practice provides a good model for other less-experienced staff. The headteacher makes sure that the subject leader has opportunities to work alongside colleagues in the classroom to develop their skills.

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

- ensuring that there is a clear progression in the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills across the school
- developing greater consistency in teachers' marking of basic spelling mistakes and recurring errors with letter formation when handwriting
- providing more opportunities for pupils to write in their books.

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

**Melanie Knowles**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**