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Miss S Eastwood
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Eastwood

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 5 March 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 you, your English subject leader and a group of pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; a walk around the school with you and your English subject leader to discuss the school's work in English; and observations of three lessons in Key Stage 1, which included 2 short phonic (the sounds letters make) sessions and short observations in all the classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities in communication and language, reading and writing that are much lower than expected for children of their age. They make good progress. Although their attainment remains below the expected level of attainment at the start of Year 1, they are more ready to learn and make good progress in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Attainment in reading and writing has improved. By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is close to the national average. Overall in 2013, attainment in reading and writing was the highest for five years. However,

there is more to be done to ensure that a greater proportion of more-able pupils achieve the higher level, particularly in writing.

- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonic (the sounds letters make) screening check in 2013 in Year 1 and Year 2 was above the national average.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy reading the wide range of books available to them in school. They have positive attitudes to writing and apply themselves, sustaining their concentration well during writing activities.

Teaching in English is good.

- Teachers plan lessons that are closely linked to the levels of ability of the different groups of pupils within the class. Activities are pitched to provide further challenge to enable pupils to progress to the next level. However, teachers do not always use questioning precisely enough to challenge pupils' thinking and develop their understanding, particularly those pupils of higher ability.
- Classrooms are well organised, with interesting and helpful displays which support pupils' learning well. A wide range of books is available for pupils. They are positive about their reading and enjoy the opportunity to share books at home with their families.
- Teachers make clear to pupils what they are learning about during lessons. The objectives for learning are displayed on pupils' work. In most cases, teachers mark work by pointing out how pupils have achieved the intended learning. However, opportunities for pupils to respond to this feedback, whether verbal or written, are limited at present.

The curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is well organised. Planned themes are designed to engage pupils by making relevant links to their interests. The themes successfully excite and enthuse pupils. Focused weeks, such as the 'Everybody Writes' week and book week, support pupils' reading and writing progress well.
- Celebrations of pupils' work are evident in classrooms and corridors. The recent theme of the Polar Regions was linked well to history through study of the expeditions of explorers such as Sir Ernest Shackleton. Lively displays of pupils' writing and art work provided clear evidence of their enjoyment in learning about these parts of the world.
- Visitors such as the author, Julia Jarman, and trips to places of interest enable pupils to have a better understanding of how authors write for a particular audience. Pupils were excited about the opportunity on World Book Day to visit a large bookshop in the town.

Leadership and management of English are good.

- You and your English subject leader have correctly identified the most important areas for improvement. Writing is a key theme of the school

improvement plan. Improvements in pupils' attainment and progress indicate there is good capacity to further improve standards in reading and writing.

- Pupils' progress is checked frequently. Meetings take place regularly with teachers to identify pupils who may be underachieving. However, the information about groups of pupils is not analysed with sufficient precision to drive improvement rapidly.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment and increasing rates of pupils' progress even further in writing, particularly for the more able, by:
 - encouraging pupils to respond to marking and feedback so that they show that they understand how to improve their work
 - using questioning more effectively to extend pupils' thinking and develop their understanding
- sharpening the analysis of the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils in order to drive further improvement more rapidly.

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

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector