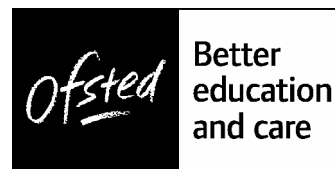


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Mr Kyndt  
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Dear Mr Kyndt

### Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 and 19 September to look at work in English. As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject the visit had a particular focus on our current survey theme: provision for poetry.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of five lessons, three of those full double periods. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in English are very good

- Standards in English are significantly above average in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 with significant value added to the average standards pupils have on joining the school.
- Achievement in literacy is very high and girls make excellent progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening. In Key Stage 4 the quality of extended writing is particularly good.
- Pupils make good progress in the development of personal skills; they are very well behaved, conscientious about their work in English and unfailingly polite and attentive.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good.

- Teachers are caring, conscientious and thorough in helping pupils to develop their skills. Lessons are carefully planned and questioning is used well by the teachers to draw out contributions from pupils.
- Teachers use the same materials with each class in the year and most pupils do the same work. While this ensures consistency, there is insufficient extension in lessons for the very able pupils. On occasions, the content of lessons is not matched well to the needs and interests of less able pupils and teachers compensate by spending too long on whole class teaching so that pupils lose the opportunity to engage independently with the work.
- Pupils' progress is very regularly monitored and assessed. Teachers mark written work regularly and usually constructively. Pupils are fully aware of the progress they are making.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in the subject is good.

- Good attention is given to the study of literature, to the development of basic skills, to extended writing and to speaking and listening.
- Pupils have good opportunities to read widely across both key stages. However, their experience of drama, media and ICT is more limited at key Stage 3.

## Leadership and management of English

The quality of leadership and management of the subject are good.

- The department is well managed and standards have risen sharply over the past five years.
- Self-evaluation is appropriate, although it has not identified the gaps in the curriculum referred to above. Improvement planning is based on clear targets and these are implemented successfully year on year.

## Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is satisfactory overall but with weaknesses in Key Stage 3

- Pupils like poetry but in Key Stage 3 they have very few opportunities to study poems or to write them. Pupils are largely unfamiliar with the forms of different kinds of poetry, such as haiku, sonnet or ballad.
- In Key Stage 4 pupils talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about themes, form and content in poetry. As with younger pupils, those in their GCSE years are given few opportunities to write poetry.
- The department runs a Writer of the Year competition in the summer term and this gives rise to a range of poetry written by pupils. However, the department does not build upon this enthusiasm to develop pupils' creative skills in writing poetry.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in the subject is very good

- All groups of pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress in literacy. Less able pupils are given intensive teaching in Year 7 and are often brought to an average level by the end of Year 9.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language make progress similar to that of other pupils.
- Pupils on the Gifted and Talented register make good progress but there is limited extension work for them in English.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring lessons are more consistently matched to the needs and interests of all groups of pupils so that they enjoy their learning
- broadening the range of the English curriculum to include more attention to the creative areas, such as drama and poetry, more in-depth attention to media topics and more use of ICT
- providing more opportunities for enhancement for Gifted and Talented pupils.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/Local Learning Skills Council. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and made available to the team for the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Hill  
Additional Inspector