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Miss Grundy  
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Dear Miss Grundy

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 October 2006 to inspect 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, review of pupils' work and observation of three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be satisfactory although some aspects of provision are good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in English are satisfactory.

- Standards in English are significantly below average. However, the unvalidated results for 2006 show substantial improvement.
- The PANDA data suggests that pupils' achievement in the past has been poor. However, the school faces significant challenges since attainment in English is below average on entry and many pupils speak languages other than English outside school.
- Evidence from lessons observed and talking to pupils suggests that achievement overall is satisfactory. This is confirmed by the unvalidated 2006 results where some pupils have made good progress.
- Test results for reading are lower than for writing.

## Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory.

- This inspection judges teaching to be satisfactory overall, in line with the progress made by pupils. This judgement was confirmed by other evidence such as lesson observations and the work sample.
- Lessons were marked by good relationships and effective class management that contributed to very positive pupil attitudes.
- Writing is taught systematically and teachers focus on speaking and listening in order to support pupils' communication skills.
- Lessons observed did not always provide sufficient challenge for average and more able pupils.
- Assessment in English is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and the best marking is of a very high quality.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum in English engages and supports the pupils, most of whom speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school provides a wide range of experiences, both inside and beyond school to stimulate their literacy skills.
- Reading has been promoted through initiatives such as 'Reading is Fundamental' and practices including guided reading. However, test results suggest that this is a priority for development alongside improvements to the school library.
- The school has a good programme of enrichment activities which includes regular encounters with writers.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory.

- The school has a secure view of its overall performance in English although data needs to be analysed more closely.
- There is a good sense of direction. The school has become involved in the ISP initiative and this is producing a systematic approach to tracking progress, and setting and reviewing targets for pupils.
- There are strengths in assessment and the curriculum for English.
- The subject action plan identifies an appropriate improvement strategy for English but needs to focus more on outcomes for pupils.
- The subject leader should be more directly involved in monitoring and evaluation.

## Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is satisfactory.

- Pupils have positive attitudes towards poetry.
- The school builds poetry into schemes of work across all years although the range of poetry studied is limited. There are few opportunities for pupils to read poems from different cultures.
- One poetry lesson was observed. This was of good quality and led to effective writing from pupils including lines such as "a magical sword that can control time" and "the dagger of time that will unleash evil" in response to a poem by Kit Wright.
- Pupils' poems are displayed around school and collected in anthologies by teachers.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- The school is an orderly community and children work and play together cooperatively. Pupils are very well integrated and relationships are positive.
- Support for the many pupils with EAL is good. In lessons, teaching assistants work closely with teachers to meet the pupils' needs, providing support where necessary with children's home language. Teachers use strategies that support pupils' learning well such as visual prompts and first hand experience.
- Teachers focus on speaking and listening and this helps many pupils to become confident speakers of English.
- The school has a good range of intervention programmes to support the learning of particular groups of pupils e.g. Slovakian pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- extending challenge for average and more able pupils within lessons
- raising standards in reading, including developing the school library
- providing a broader experience of poetry, including poems from a range of cultures.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

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

Phil Jarrett  
Her Majesty's Inspector