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Mr A Seymour
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Seymour

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and the pupils, during our visit on 20 November 2006 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 theme: the 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 eight lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good with some very good features.

Achievement and standards in English

Achievement and standards in English are good overall, in spite of the poorer than expected national test results last summer.

- Pupils enter the school with below expected levels of attainment and make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and good progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Evidence seen during the inspection suggests that pupils are making good progress in reading and writing, especially since the introduction of such strategies as the Reading Bug and layered curriculum targets in writing.
- There is a need to improve standards in speaking and listening in the older year groups.

Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- The many strengths in teaching include consistently clear and progressive planning; good differentiation; the very good subject knowledge of teachers, including the way in which they model writing; the very good pace of lessons and classroom management; the very good use of teaching assistants (TAs) and volunteer helpers to support learning; good resources and the good use of ICT to support both teaching and learning.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils are very enthusiastic about both their reading and writing and behave very well in English lessons. Opportunities for reflective or extended talk by pupils are sometimes missed.
- Assessment is good overall, particularly during lessons. There is a good match of activities to the varying range of abilities and needs of the pupils and the work challenges and interests them. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked, providing clear targets for improvement. However, there are some inconsistencies between marking strategies within some year groups and opportunities for more formative feedback are sometimes missed.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The curriculum in English is good.

- The school provides a wide and interesting curriculum which fully meets statutory requirements and provides well for the interests and needs of all groups of pupils.
- Intervention strategies to address underachievement have been very effective.

Leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are outstanding.

- There is a cohesive approach by senior management which ensures that the English co-ordinator is well supported.
- Action plans for English are effective because they contain well planned and relevant priorities with clear and measurable success criteria.
- Rigorous monitoring by both senior staff and the co-ordinator effectively ensures continuous improvement in English.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- The teaching and learning of poetry is well planned and ensures progression in the pupils' experience and understanding of poetry.
- As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about the features of poetry. They talk with enthusiasm about the poems that they know and have very positive attitudes towards reading, writing and analysing poetry.

Inclusion

Inclusion in English is outstanding.

- There is a clear and effective whole school commitment to ensuring that all groups of pupils' needs are fully met.
- The school carefully analyses the attainment of all groups of pupils and puts in place very effective strategies, such as targeted support for underachieving boys, to address underachievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to ensure that pupils have opportunities for extended and reflective talk
- to ensure that good practice in formative feedback to pupils on the quality of their writing is consistently applied throughout the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. 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

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector