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Mrs S. Bates  
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Dear Mrs Bates

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 01 February 2007 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, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, and observation of three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Standards and achievement

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Pupils start school with attainment well below average.
- The school works hard to raise standards against a background of high levels of mobility, challenging behaviour and high numbers of pupils entering the school as early learners of English as an additional language. Contextual value added data indicates pupils make satisfactory progress in English overall.
- Most recent figures show average attainment for pupils who have been in the school from the Reception year, but below average attainment overall.
- English makes a very good contribution to the personal development of pupils through collaborative and independent work, the expression of

personal viewpoints in lessons, participation in class and school councils, in learning reviews and through drama.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Lessons are interesting, varied, challenging, well resourced and well paced.
- A good range of teaching strategies address pupils' weak learning skills which constrain progress. These strategies engage learners well.
- Lessons observed featured good subject knowledge, well differentiated planning and well structured teaching.
- Most classrooms provide a highly interactive environment for literacy learning.
- Assessment, including probing questioning, pupil and group targets, careful and thorough marking, regular moderation of writing and reading reviews, is used well to motivate, encourage and track progress.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The English curriculum is innovative, creative and carefully structured. It meets the needs of all pupils well and ensures systematic progression in learning.
- The fortnightly English 'menu', targeted at improving writing through speaking and listening, drama and structured sessions culminating in edited or published work, is highly successful.
- Home learning activities reinforce learning well.
- Technology is used well to introduce and extend skills and to present and publish work.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The school has an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses across the subject. A range of well targeted action demonstrates improvement in writing in particular.
- Clear and well implemented policies and procedures, good provision for professional development, a strong focus on teaching skills and rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure consistently high quality provision.
- The performance of pupils is analysed rigorously and good interventions, including strategies for engagement in learning, result in at least satisfactory gains in progress.

## Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is satisfactory.

- Poetry is clearly established in schemes of work.
- Pupils enjoy reading and writing poetry. They are proud that their work is on display, published, and read by others.
- Although pupils recall the content of poems reasonably well, their recall of poets and titles is limited.
- Plans are in hand to extend the range of measures for teaching poetry in order to secure progression.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is very good.

- The school is highly responsive to the needs of individual and vulnerable pupils. It is particularly successful in enabling those with challenging behaviour to work well in groups and independently.
- Provision, including a good range of teaching strategies and well executed and evaluated intervention programmes, is highly successful in engaging struggling and reluctant learners.
- Good, specifically targeted support from teaching assistants and additional provision for pupils learning English as an additional language promotes inclusion very well. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. Progress is good for those learning English as an additional Language.
- Cultural diversity is strongly celebrated through good quality literature.
- Pupils of all abilities enjoy English. They are serious, articulate and enthusiastic about their learning and progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to improve the standard of writing; and
- implementing plans to extend provision for poetry.

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.

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

Rosemary Matthews  
Her Majesty's Inspector