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Mr R Astley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Astley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 06 March 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 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

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 four lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement in English are good.

- Standards in English on entry to the school are above average with a below average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD).
- Standards have been rising steadily over a number of years and are now above average at both level 4 and level 5 in the Key Stage 2 national tests.
- National data and data produced by the school show that the achievement of pupils, including those with LDD, is good.

- During the visit, standards were seen to be above average. Speaking and listening and response to literature were both strengths. Writing was not as strong but was above average.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Planning is good with a clear focus on what pupils will learn.
- There is effective differentiation based on teachers' assessments of pupils' needs.
- Teachers plan for a wide range of interesting and unusual activities.
- Very good use is made of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking.
- Pupils with LDD receive good support from teaching assistants.
- Marking of work is frequent and offers good quality advice.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is well-planned to meet pupils' needs and provides breadth and balance.
- Curriculum documents are clear, well-organised and constantly revised.
- There is good provision of training to update staff on curriculum requirements in English.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management in English are good. The recently appointed leader shows some developing strengths.

- The tracking of pupils' progress is well-organised and clear, enabling accurate, early identification of areas of concern.
- The lack of opportunities for pupils to attempt timed, extended writing has been identified as a reason for under-performance in tests and regular opportunities to improve this have been put in place.
- Insufficient lesson monitoring inhibits the identification of areas for development and the sharing of good practice.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- The curriculum provides for the frequent study of poetry.
- Pupils express enthusiasm for reading and writing poetry and show at least satisfactory knowledge of a range of poets.
- There is a good range of pupils' own poetry on display.

- In 2006, the school had some pupils' poetry published as part of a young writer competition. This raised the status of poetry in the school.
- Pupils especially appreciated their visit to a poet who helped them to write their own poetry.

Inclusion

The quality of inclusion is good.

- All pupils, including those with LDD, make good progress.
- There is a good programme of provision to support pupils who are under-achieving.
- There are effective arrangements to identify and meet pupils' needs.
- Teaching assistant provide good support to pupils who need extra help.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- carrying out regular lesson observations, to support the sharing of good practice and raise the quality of all teaching to the level of the best .

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 and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Walker
Additional Inspector