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Mrs Hawkins
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hawkins

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 May 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 and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards throughout the school are well above average in English and the achievement of the pupils is good.

- At Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing fell in the national tests in 2004 and 2005 but rose in 2006 and were well above average. Standards observed during the visit were well above average in reading, writing and in speaking and listening.
- At Key Stage 2, standards dipped in 2005 but rose in 2006. Standards have been consistently above average over time and were well above

average in 2006. The pupils made satisfactory progress. Standards and achievement have improved this year and the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is now good.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their English lessons. They behave well, enjoy their learning and take pride in the presentation and quality of their written work.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

Teaching and learning in English are good.

- The best lessons are brisk and purposeful, with clear learning objectives which are well understood by the pupils.
- In these lessons, the teachers' questioning is challenging. It probes the pupils' understanding, making them think clearly and evaluate their answers carefully.
- Activities are appropriately planned in a variety of whole class, group and paired settings. The pupils respond well to these arrangements.
- The school is developing new assessment arrangements which enable teachers to track the progress made by the pupils accurately. This is improving their rate of achievement. However, not all pupils are aware of their targets or how to meet them.
- Although marking is detailed and shows the pupils what they have done well, it does not consistently tell them what their next steps to improve their work should be.
- Lesson plans describe the activities that the pupils will engage in clearly, but they do not always focus on the learning outcomes for the pupils or give the pupils sufficient opportunities to review their learning together.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school is developing the curriculum to provide more opportunities for literacy in a range of subjects and activities.
- Creative approaches across the curriculum provide an interesting and appropriate connection between subjects.
- The curriculum promotes progression in reading, writing, speaking and listening in a way which emphasises the relationships between them.
- A good range of trips and visitors to the school enhances the curriculum.
- Pupils respond well to the curriculum and clearly enjoy their learning.

Leadership and management of English

The quality of the leadership and management of English is good.

- A school focus on developing the capacity of subject leaders has resulted in clear improvements which have had a positive impact in the last two years on standards and achievement.
- Leadership and management are ambitious, determined and committed to raising standards.
- You and the subject leader for English have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. You plan strategically and effectively to promote improvement.
- Monitoring is detailed and regular and informs planning well.
- The improved use of assessment data has raised standards and achievement.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- Pupils enjoy poetry and can speak enthusiastically about it.
- They enjoy writing poetry and do so successfully. Pupils take pride in the class anthologies which they produce.
- Pupils are given examples of different styles of poetry to use as models for their own writing. They enjoy discussing the quality of their poetry in class.
- Older pupils are able to discuss poems critically in speech and writing, using apt vocabulary.
- Poetry is taught in a variety of ways and for a range of purposes. It is taught as an enjoyable and important part of the English curriculum and features in other subjects such as in science topics. Some good practice in the teaching of poetry was observed during the visit.
- The pupils experience an appropriate range of poetry during their time in school, but the choice of poetry is largely decided by individual teachers without an overall plan.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- All groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress.
- The curriculum is inclusive and all groups of pupils are well supported in their learning.

- Teaching assistants play an active and effective role in lessons.
- Effective assessment ensures that pupils are grouped well in lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making sure that marking consistently shows the pupils what their next steps should be to improve their work
- ensuring that the pupils know their individual targets, what they should do to achieve them and how they relate to the overall quality of their work.

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

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector