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Mr Stephen Pugh
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Pugh

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 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 satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English are average and pupils make satisfactory progress.

- Throughout the school, standards are higher in reading than in writing. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress although boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Pupils enter the school with standards that are in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing fell in 2006 and were average in reading and well below

average in writing. However, they have risen this year and are average in reading and writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress.

- At Key Stage 2, standards in English are average and the pupils make satisfactory progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They speak enthusiastically about English and are keen to do well.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

- Lessons are well planned and clearly linked to the pupils' previous learning. They have clear learning objectives which are well understood by the pupils.
- Teaching assistants play an active and effective role in supporting pupils in classrooms.
- Occasionally, teachers give too much time to explanation and instruction in lessons when pupils are ready to engage in activities.
- There have been recent improvements in the regularity, accuracy and use of assessment information, particularly in writing.
- Although work is marked regularly, marking does not always explain what the pupils should do to improve their work.
- More use is now being made of targets for classes and individual pupils and this is beginning to have a positive impact on learning. However, not all pupils are fully aware of their targets or of what they need to do to meet them.
- Pupils have ample opportunity to improve their speaking and listening but the assessment of oral work is underdeveloped.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets the needs of all learners and is adapted and modified to provide satisfactory intervention for individuals and groups of learners.
- There are adequate opportunities for cross curricular work and for literacy to be developed through topics. The school has plans to develop this further and to increase the opportunities for creative approaches.
- There is a good range of trips and visits.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are satisfactory

- There have been some recent improvements in subject leadership. The school's leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in English well.

- There is now a good analysis and understanding of assessment data which is informing teaching, learning and the curriculum well.
- Book scrutinies give an accurate picture of the quality of planning and marking.
- Strategic planning has improved and now ensures a satisfactory rate of progress across the school, although the difference between achievement in writing and reading persists.
- Lesson observations are not conducted with sufficient frequency or focus to have the maximum impact on raising the quality of provision.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about reading poetry and can express opinions about individual poets well.
- They enjoy writing poetry and assess their work well in class discussions. This encourages them to discuss the use of different parts of speech, such as adverbs, and has a positive impact on their understanding of language in general.
- Pupils particularly value opportunities to recite and perform poetry.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about poetry and poetry lessons are lively and engaging.
- Older pupils are developing their ability to analyse and write about poetry well.
- Although poetry features in the curriculum and is taught well, there is no overview of the types of poetry that the school would like the pupils to experience by the end of Year 6.

Inclusion

Inclusion is good.

- The special provision for pupils with language difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder is good and contributes well to the ethos of the school. These pupils make good progress in their language development.
- All groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning.
- The mainstream support for pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities is good.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising standards in writing throughout the school
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more frequently and with a clearer focus
- improving the consistency of marking in the school.

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