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16 July 2007

Mr M Chapman
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Chapman

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in poetry

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 July to look at work in 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 without their consent.

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 two lessons.

Features of good practice observed

- The English department has a team of well qualified teachers, several of whom are knowledgeable and very enthusiastic about poetry.
- The head of department provides a strong and effective lead in promoting poetry within the subject.
- The department makes very good use of National Poetry Day to promote poems, encouraging all pupils to participate.
- The department promotes poetry well through a wide range of measures including links with local arts festivals, visits to local "poetry" sites such as Dove Cottage, and regular workshops in school by poets.
- Competitions, including internal poetry prizes, are very well used to encourage poetry, including pupils' independent writing. This leads to very good quality work by pupils.
- Teachers make use of a wide range of interactive strategies in the classroom that engage pupils' interest and motivation.
- Wider uses of poetry across the school, such as in Remembrance Day and themed days, give added status to the study of poetry.

Areas for development

- The department should review the role of poetry in the English curriculum at Key Stage 3.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop poetry in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority Council and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett HMI
Subject Adviser for English