

02 October 2007

Mrs Stella Belgrove  
Headteacher  
Hook Norton Church of England Primary School  
Sibford Road  
Hook Norton  
Banbury  
OX15 5JS

Dear Mrs Belgrove

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 September 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: independent learning in English. 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 four lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be outstanding.

#### Achievement and standards

Standards in English are above average and achievement is outstanding.

- Children enter the school with standards that are in line or slightly above national expectations. All groups of pupils make excellent progress in their learning throughout the school so that by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are securely above average overall with many pupils attaining standards which are well above average. In the national tests in 2007, the pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress.
- The school sets challenging targets for the pupils which they exceed.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are well behaved, thoroughly engaged in their work and their motivation is excellent.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is outstanding.

- Lessons are carefully planned, ensuring that an appropriate range of activities engages and motivates the pupils. Whole class, paired and group work are used effectively.
- The purpose of the lessons is made clear to the pupils and referred to effectively throughout the lessons.
- The pace of the lessons is brisk and appropriate, providing suitable challenge and support to which the pupils respond well.
- Good use is made of oral work in lessons, including drama and role play. Teachers question the pupils skilfully to probe and further their understanding.
- Pupils are set individual targets which they understand clearly. They discuss their areas for improvement confidently.
- A good range of assessment techniques is regularly used. However, although marking is consistent and regular, it does not always point out the next steps for learning clearly.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and matches the needs of all learners well. There is ample opportunity for reinforcing and developing literacy skills in other subjects.
- Creativity is excellently encouraged in a way which ensures that basic skills are developed well. Careful and imaginative curriculum planning ensures that pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning.
- The school makes very good use of links with other institutions, such as the local secondary school, which is a specialist performing arts college.

## Leadership and management of English

The quality of leadership and management in English is outstanding.

- You and your subject leader have a detailed and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in English.
- Excellent leadership and management ensure that the school has a shared approach to the teaching of English, based on good practice and very good curriculum planning.
- Planning is creative and flexible, drawing on the strengths of individual teachers well and encouraging fresh and effective approaches.
- Monitoring and evaluation are regular and detailed, providing a sound basis for constantly improving provision, leading to outstanding achievement.

## Independent learning in English

Independent learning in English is good.

- The pupils are enthusiastic readers who choose their own books well and discuss their reading confidently.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities that they have in writing to create their own stories and choose appropriate formats for their work.
- Good use is made of oral work to promote independent thinking and expression, particularly through discussion and role play.
- Research skills are well developed through appropriate homework and the use of information and communication technology. However, the school library is not fully exploited for encouraging research and information gathering from the printed page.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is outstanding.

- All groups of learners, including the more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities, make at least good progress and achievement is outstanding overall.
- Pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported in their learning by teachers and specialist staff.
- The curriculum is accessible to all pupils and promotes their achievement and enjoyment excellently.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that marking consistently identifies what pupils should do to improve their standards
- developing the use of the library to improve independent research.

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