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Mrs L Barton
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Dear Mrs Barton

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 November 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 independent learning. 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 two lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good, with outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good. Standards are above average.

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Some pupils have high levels of attainment. All groups of pupils achieve equally well and make at least good progress.
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1, attainment in reading and writing at Level 2+ is above average. At Level 3+, attainment is above average in reading and average in writing.
- At Key Stage 2, the school adds increasing value to pupils' learning. This was significant in 2007, when results were above average at Level 4+ and well above average at Level 5+, the latter exceeding national

figures by 22%. However, boys attain less well than girls in writing at Level 4+.

- Standards of speaking and listening are above average. Pupils are confident, articulate and fluent speakers and use a wide vocabulary. They sustain critical and reflective listening and respect and value the views of others.
- Good teaching of literacy skills enables pupils to make good progress in subjects across the curriculum.
- English makes a very good contribution to the personal development of pupils, particularly through collaborative and pair work, opportunities to express personal opinions in lessons, and taking responsibility for initiatives in school and from enrichment activities.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Good investment in professional development and effective teaching secures at least good progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and help to promote positive and independent attitudes to learning. Teaching assistants support learning very well.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a good range of strategies and resources, including technology, to make lessons challenging, interesting and enjoyable. Lessons observed were: carefully planned and differentiated; objectives were clear and skills carefully and thoroughly taught; pupils knew what they were to achieve and where to get the help they needed; and effective discussion and questioning were used well to further learning.
- Pupils are keen to learn, work hard and achieve well.
- Assessment for learning features strongly and impacts clearly on pupils' progress. Pupils are set challenging targets, the progress of individuals is monitored and tracked outstandingly well and underachievement is supported promptly. Careful, thorough and supportive marking helps pupils to improve, as does peer assessment.
- Assessment of learning outcomes regularly informs planning and regular and accurate moderation ensures consistency in teacher assessment.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The English curriculum is carefully structured for breadth, balance and progression and subject to rigorous review and evaluation so that teachers build on pupils' knowledge and skills systematically. Cross-curricular links are made very well and reinforce literacy.
- Well planned and well delivered interventions show good gains in learning for targeted pupils. Enrichment activities engage pupils well.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Very good leadership ensures consistently high quality provision and contributes to above average standards.
- There is a clear sense of direction for English, clear priorities, good procedures, very good planning for improvement and excellent arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.
- Performance data are analysed very well.
- Particularly good progress has been made in English since the previous whole school inspection in 2006.

Provision for independent learning

Provision for independent learning is outstanding.

- The school builds provision for independent learning into planning for lessons, homework tasks, and discussions with pupils and marking very well. Pupils enjoy English, gain significantly in confidence and apply what they have been taught effectively.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities to read texts of their own choice, to examine these for effect and to talk about them with their teacher and other pupils. They use technology very well for research and to produce interesting individual writing, and there are good opportunities for them to choose their own writing topic. Teachers provide good support with writing for those who need it, while others write with increasing independence across a range of genres.
- Good provision for speaking and listening enables pupils to present their work regularly and to talk openly and well. They enjoy discussion and are confident about expressing their own ideas and opinions.

Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The school secures the inclusion of all pupils very successfully. It is very responsive to the needs of individuals: their learning needs are known well and their views and opinions are valued and explicitly sought by adults.
- Expectations for all pupils to achieve well are high. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff contributes well to the good rate of progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties.
- The progress of all groups of pupils is tracked very carefully and work that is well matched to need secures at least good progress.
- Well targeted and well delivered interventions close gaps in attainment.

- Good resources from a range of cultures and beliefs and themed weeks offer a broad experience of literature.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to raise standards in writing as identified by 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

Rosemary Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector