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11 December 2007

Mrs D Parry  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Parry

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 December 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 satisfactory.

#### Achievement and standards

Standards are in line with the national average, and achievement is satisfactory.

- In view of their average starting points, pupils have to date made progress at about the expected rate. No groups under-perform.
- Standards have fallen over the past five years and national tests indicate they are below average in both key stages. Pupils do better in reading than writing in Key Stage 1. Higher than normal mobility has had some adverse effect on overall standards.
- Following a concerted effort to improve the teaching of reading and writing, the school's tracking and the work of pupils indicate that progress is accelerating this year. Writing is more individual and more careful, for instance.

- Pupils enjoy English because they find work interesting. They are ready to learn, willingly join in activities and concentrate well. Older pupils take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.

### Quality of teaching and learning of English

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features.

- Teachers are embedding appropriate strategies to improve basic skills and the quality of writing, although their effectiveness in doing so varies.
- Well planned teaching helps younger pupils to link sounds and letters and gives them varied opportunities to use their emerging writing. Teachers of all age groups make increasing use of practical activities, including talk, to boost pupils' confidence, and encourage them to read and write independently. Sometimes these activities need more careful planning to ensure they engage all pupils effectively.
- Pupils are learning good habits in handwriting and self-checking spelling and punctuation. They receive helpfully precise feedback on their work and try hard to act on advice, because they know their targets will be followed up. As a result older pupils are demonstrating some higher level skills of reading and writing, and are catching up in their basic skills.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

- Drawing on recent national guidance, the curriculum has been refreshed to meet the needs and interests of the full range of pupils and to plan opportunities across the curriculum to develop literacy.
- Teachers are making sensible use of computers to consolidate basic skills and beginning to exploit their potential to teach higher editing and research skills.
- The school makes good use of its resources to enrich learning. For example, the younger children relish acting out the story of Red Riding Hood in the leaf-strewn forest glade in the corner of their classroom, and in using a variety of materials for communicating in writing, indoors and out.
- The school is working hard to broaden its stock of reading books and encourage wider reading.

### Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- You and the subject leader have achieved a great deal in a short time, by identifying what needs to improve and tackling it rigorously.

- The subject leader uses strong subject knowledge to model very effectively the strategies the school is using to raise achievement.
- Training has been well focussed on what monitoring has highlighted as priorities. There is good practice in English teaching within the school and steps are being taken to share this further, through planning and evaluating together.
- Pupils' work is improving in quality and those spoken to say they enjoy the subject more recently. While there has not yet been time for improvements to show in national tests, provision is better and work shows signs of greater progress.

### Independent learning in English

English teaching promotes independence in learning satisfactorily.

- There are increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently. In some lessons teachers are very effective in helping pupils, including the very young, to learn for themselves. Pupils are given scope to ask their own questions and to apply their new understanding to tasks which give them choices. Pupils learn to become confident in their own skills and talk openly and well about their work.
- The school needs to develop greater independence in homework provision, the use of information and communication technology and individual reading.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is satisfactory.

- More vulnerable pupils and those with higher prior attainment make satisfactory progress like their peers. This is because their individual needs are recognised and met by teachers and other adults. All pupils spoken to demonstrated good engagement with their learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving standards, especially in writing and
- securing consistency of quality in teaching by spreading the existing good practice.

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

Susan Bowles  
Her Majesty's Inspector