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Mr Wilcox  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Wilcox

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 December 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 three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English are above average. Achievement is good.

- Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in speaking and listening, to attain the skills expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Their writing skills are not as well developed as their reading skills.
- Standards in English are above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and more pupils attain the highest levels than pupils nationally.
- Attainment is better in reading than writing. The school has had a focus on developing writing which has resulted in improvements, particularly in Key Stage 1.

- Contextual value added data and the school's tracking information shows that the progress pupils make in English has improved in the past three years and is good.
- Results in 2007 in Key Stage 2 fell from the previous year but challenging targets were met overall and exceeded for more able pupils.

### Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English is good.

- Pupils say that teachers make English fun. Lessons are carefully planned and well structured with a good range of varied tasks to actively engage pupils. As a result, they have good attitudes to learning, behave well and enjoy English.
- Expectations are clear because learning objectives are shared at the start of lessons. Pupils have targets for improvement in English which are reviewed regularly and referred to in lessons.
- Questions are used carefully to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning.
- Pupils like working with each other and are given good opportunities to share their ideas and improve their work by using writing buddies and scribing partners.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and some marking identifies clearly what pupils need to do to improve but this is in its early stages of development and not yet consistent.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum covers all aspects of English well, is relevant and builds effectively on prior learning so pupils make good progress.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects are carefully planned.
- There is a clear focus on promoting writing and good use is made of external links, including other schools and theatre groups, to give pupils real experiences about which to write.
- The learning environment in classrooms and other areas of the schools is attractive and promotes literacy very well. Classrooms have discrete writing areas and there is a good range of displays linked to all aspects of English. This supports learning, celebrates success and contributes well to pupils' enjoyment.
- Homework is set regularly and good information is provided to support pupils and parents, particularly in reading, through 'Reading Detectives' and 'Book Shares'.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- Self evaluation is accurate and informed by the systematic tracking of pupil progress and analysis of data.
- The leadership team has a clear understanding of what the school does well and where improvements in English need to be made. There is a sharp focus on improving writing.
- Monitoring by the English subject leader is in place and is used to inform planning for improvement. However these plans lack precise targets and details of how success will be measured and evaluated.
- Training undertaken by the subject leader is relevant and used effectively to develop staff subject knowledge and expertise.

## Independent learning in English

Provision for independent learning in English is good.

- Pupils are given good guidance on how to choose their own reading books from a wide range of good quality texts and speak with confidence about how they make their choices.
- Older pupils act as 'reading buddies' to the younger pupils which contributes well to their enjoyment and independence.
- Writing journals are used well to encourage pupils to experiment with different forms of writing and pupils confidently use a dictionary and thesaurus when appropriate.
- Some pupils say they have many ideas of their own and would like even more opportunities to write about them.
- There are good opportunities to develop independence in speaking and listening, reading and writing in the Foundation Stage through role play, discrete writing areas and carefully planned, practical activities.
- Homework tasks build effectively on lessons. They encourage pupils to use their research and information and communication technology skills to extend and apply what they have learned in school.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Work is planned carefully and meets the needs of all learners well so they make good progress.
- There are high expectations of all pupils and regular audits of need ensure that additional support is well targeted and reviewed regularly.
- Teaching assistants use a good range of interesting, practical activities to support pupils well in small withdrawal groups and in lessons.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the consistency of marking to ensure pupils know precisely what they have done well and how to improve, and
- developing the English plans for improvement to include precise targets and how success will be measured and evaluated.

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

Jackie Krafft  
Her Majesty's Inspector