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Dear Miss Harrison

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 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 seven lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good and standards are above average.

- All groups of pupils, including able pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve equally well, sometimes exceeding targets set for them. Good attention to literacy skills enables pupils to make good progress across the curriculum.
- Attainment on entry to the school is average. Pupils make steady progress at Key Stage 1. Results are improving, significantly so in writing, and are broadly average. Progress accelerates at Key Stage 2. Results are above average and show an improving trend. In 2007, performance in reading was particularly marked with attainment well above national figures. However, at Level 5+, results for writing were considerably below those for reading.

- Standards of speaking and listening are good. Most pupils are clear and confident speakers. They listen to others respectfully and well.
- English makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils, particularly through collaborative work, class, group and pair discussions, presentations and opportunities to express personal views in lessons.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Planning for lessons, judicious year and ability groupings, and good support for individual pupils meet the diverse needs of learners in mixed aged and mixed ability classes well. Pupils enjoy English, work hard and make good progress.
- Lessons are interesting and appropriately challenging. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. They use a good range of strategies and high quality resources, including computers and other technologies, to promote learning.
- Skills are thoroughly and systematically taught and applied well through good learning tasks.
- Support staff assist and challenge pupils with learning needs, as well as those who attain highly, very well. Volunteers provide good support for reading.
- The progress of individual pupils is tracked particularly well and those at risk of underachievement receive timely support.
- Year, group and individual targets, combined with marking that identifies gaps in achievement, are helping pupils to improve their writing.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure progression and reviewed systematically for suitability and relevance. Cross curricular links are made well. Good inclusion of Information and Communication Technology and good opportunities for speaking and listening develop and reinforce literacy well.
- The systematic inclusion of phonics is securing progression in the Foundation Stage.
- Interventions are well planned, well targeted, well delivered and result in good gains in learning.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- Good leadership ensures good provision and contributes to above average standards. Plans are in hand to support more recent arrangements as priorities are implemented.
- The school has a very clear and accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, clear priorities and a good grasp of how to improve. Action is appropriate and well targeted, in particular in improving levels of literacy at Key Stage 1 and addressing writing at higher levels across the school. Excellent analysis and evaluation of data and other performance information and careful monitoring of provision explicitly inform the setting of targets, support and interventions.
- Good provision for professional development improves teachers' subject knowledge and underpins consistently good practice.
- Good progress has been made in English since the previous whole school inspection in 2006.

Provision for independent learning

Provision for independent learning is good.

- Pupils enjoy English and gain in confidence in all aspects of the subject through good opportunities for independent learning.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff consistently encourage good independent attitudes.
- Independent learning is promoted well through good opportunities in and outside of lessons for pupils to raise questions and express their views.

Inclusion

Provision for inclusion is good.

- The school is very responsive to the needs of individual pupils and meets their learning and support needs well in English.
- Expectations for all are high. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and well targeted and well delivered interventions close gaps in attainment.
- Support staff promote inclusion very well and contribute significantly to learning in English.
- Resources from a range of cultures and good attention to current affairs offer a broad experience of English.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to improve achievement and raise attainment, in writing in particular, and
- continuing to support recent developments in subject leadership.

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