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Mr T Lloyd  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lloyd

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 October 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good and standards in English are above average.

- Attainment on entry is average. By the time that the pupils leave school it is above average. Test results were above average in 2006 and remained so in 2007.
- The good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching is helping improve standards further.
- All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well.

- Pupils' standards in speaking, listening and reading are above average. The school has recognised the need to improve writing skills further across the school.

### Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in English is good.

- English teachers work well together to plan a good programme which pupils say that they enjoy a great deal.
- Teaching seen was consistently good with some outstanding feature. Pupils spoke well of teaching in English. Teachers do a particularly good job of encouraging empathic writing by pupils.
- Strengths in teaching include teachers setting clear intended learning outcomes, creating opportunities for pupils to work independently, creating an exciting learning environment, using resources effectively and giving good one-to-one support during lessons.
- Teachers have managed to inculcate a love of creative writing. The result is that pupils enjoy writing poetry and making up stories.
- Assessment helps pupils improve their work because the teachers tell them what they need to do to improve it further.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The Literacy Strategy is effectively implemented. Teachers provide a good balance between speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- The school focuses well on what it judges to be weaker areas. For example, reading is now a strength because of the strong emphasis on it over the last year.
- Where they arise, opportunities for celebrating cultural diversity are well used.

### Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- English is well led. Consequently, pupils have a positive experience of learning English. As a result of the subject leader's work, reading has improved significantly over the last year.
- Senior leaders support the subject leader well in monitoring and evaluating the subject area's work. Consequently, shortcomings are quickly identified and dealt with. For example, the school has identified its current priority of improving writing skills.
- The school is good at analysing data on attainment and taking action to improve standards. There is a less stringent focus on tracking progress

over time in order to determine to extent of each pupil's individual achievement.

## Independent learning in English

Provision for independent learning is good.

- Pupils speak highly of the opportunities that they get to work independently.
- Pupils choose their own reading and they have many opportunities to share their views of what they have read.
- There is a strong focus on creative writing which means that pupils get opportunities to write independently and to express their feelings.
- Because ICT is used regularly, pupils have many opportunities to use it to carry out research relating to English and other subjects.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Pupils feel fully included in English. As a result, no particular group stands out as achieving less than their peers.
- The use of teaching assistants is such that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, learn at a good pace.
- Effective planning ensures that pupils of all abilities are well taught.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving writing skills across the school, and
- ensuring that data are analysed systematically to track progress.

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

Faysal Mikdadi  
Additional Inspector