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Mrs D Collinson
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Dear Mrs Collinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding. Standards are slightly above average by the end of Year 6.

- Pupils start from an overall very low starting point. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and consolidate this in Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 the great majority of pupils reach or exceed nationally expected standards. Their reading is a little better than their writing, and there is room to increase the number of pupils who reach level 5 or higher.
- Achievement and standards have improved greatly for all groups of pupils over the past three years. Boys do as well as girls.
- Pupils' attitudes to literacy are exceptionally positive: they are proud of their achievements, discuss their reading enthusiastically, listen

attentively and collaborate very well. They concentrate carefully on writing clearly and effectively. Their flexibility in using standard English is weaker and an area the school is working to improve.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features.

- The strong improvement in literacy owes much to the consistently effective teaching.
- Strengths include very thorough assessment and detailed planning to meet each child's well-understood needs; and varied and engaging methods of teaching literacy which consolidate skills and understanding.
- Steps to involve parents in learning have paid off in pupils' good habits of homework and independent reading.
- Learners are well guided by marking which makes very clear what they have achieved and how to do better. Pupils are strongly motivated by the recognition and rewards for good standards and achievement.
- The pupils showed their greatest skill, creativity and enthusiasm when outstanding teaching involved them in role play or drama games, or prompted longer, more speculative talk through rich questioning.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is outstanding.

- Staff have comprehensive guidance on implementing the National Framework for literacy in a way which is consistent and progressive for pupils.
- Planning for progression is very good in most respects and there is a good balance, for example, of reading shared class texts and privately, and of reading in different ways for different purposes. Useful links are made between speaking and listening and writing.
- The good balance of shared and individual reading contributes well to the pupils' enjoyment of books. The scheme of work encompasses the purposeful use of ICT and a range of speaking and listening activities.
- Resources are good and the environment is very well used to support learning. It provides spaces for many kinds of activities, including one-to-one or small group work.
- Enrichment activities such as writing clubs, meeting authors, and staging performances help to raise pupils' enthusiasm and aspirations.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- The vision for improvement set out by you and the subject leader is very clear. There is no complacency and the school is unflinching about areas where standards need to improve.
- You and your colleagues share a strong willingness to work together to raise standards. The regularly updated action plan and records of regular core team meetings show how priorities turn into purposeful action.
- Tracking systems work well: good use is made of data to identify what still needs to improve.
- The highly committed core literacy team has been very effective in establishing the consistency of quality which has helped pupils to achieve so well. The staff are well supported through training and monitoring.

Independent learning in English

Good provision is made for independent learning in English.

- Pupils are effectively guided to read independently for pleasure and research.
- Regular, well-monitored homework makes a useful contribution to independent learning habits.
- There is good encouragement for older pupils to express their individual views in sophisticated language.

Inclusion

Inclusion is outstanding and a strength of the school.

- All groups of pupils make at least good progress.
- The school's teaching approaches ensure that boys are as enthusiastic and involved in classroom activities as girls.
- The support for any child who does not make the expected good progress in literacy is focussed and effective. It contributes well to pupils' self confidence.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the number of pupils reaching the highest levels
- widening the use of activities such as role play which give pupils practice in using different language registers.

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