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Ms S Hooper
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Hooper

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 04 February 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

Standards in English are above average. Achievement is good.

- Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with the language, literacy and communication skills expected for their age.
- Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 although better in reading than writing. Results improved in reading in 2007 but fell in writing with no pupils reaching the highest level. Boys attain well in reading compared to their peers nationally but girls do less well in writing.
- Standards have risen in the Key Stage 2 national tests for the past three years and in 2007 were exceptionally high, exceeding challenging targets.

- Although there are inconsistencies in the rates of progress pupils make throughout the school, tracking information is used well to identify underachievement and target interventions. As a result, all groups of pupils make equally good progress by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills and confidently share their ideas.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English is good.

- Good teaching and learning is reflected in the improved standards and achievement at the end of Year 6 and in the varied and interesting range of work seen in books.
- Typically, lessons are planned to provide pupils with good opportunities to work with each other, expectations are made clear and relationships are good. As a result, pupils are well behaved, have positive attitudes to learning and say that they enjoy English.
- In the best lessons, assessment information is used effectively to provide challenging activities for all pupils, a brisk pace is maintained and teaching assistants are deployed well to support learning. However, this is not consistent and progress slows when lessons are too teacher directed and activities are not well matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils know how well they are doing through feedback on regular assessments. Pupils understand their targets for improvement and are given some opportunities at the end of lessons for self evaluation.
- Work is marked regularly and praises their efforts. The best includes comments to help pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve. The school has identified this as a focus for further development.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum covers all aspects of English effectively and meets the needs of all learners well so they make good progress. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities to develop literacy skills through links made with other subjects such as history and geography.
- The school has developed a skills based approach to curriculum planning with communication skills as a key element. This supports good progress in English well and makes a positive contribution to pupils' good speaking and listening skills.
- Schemes of work have been carefully planned to ensure good progression and a range of genres in reading and writing are covered. Older pupils particularly benefit from and enjoy the opportunity to

discuss a shared text such as 'The Tudor Queen' in the discrete Reading Circle time.

- In the Foundation Stage there is discrete teaching of phonics and good use is made of a wide range of relevant resources so pupils develop early reading and writing skills well.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about enrichment activities such as trips to the theatre which support their study of Shakespeare and value the support from the local community with reading. Visits from authors and poets, other than as part of the annual book week event, are limited and there are no current plans to make links with the National Year of Reading.
- The school provides a good range of literacy resources and older pupils say they enjoy using information and communication technology (ICT) and role play in English, although younger pupils are less confident that this happens regularly.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- Self evaluation is accurate and the school leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in English informed by regular monitoring, good pupil tracking information and careful analysis of regular assessment information.
- Improvement planning has clear, measurable success criteria against which to evaluate the impact of school actions. Priorities and staff training needs have been identified through a literacy audit and performance management is used effectively to hold staff to account.
- The impact of good leadership is evident in improved standards and achievement.

Independent learning in English

Provision for independent learning in English is satisfactory.

- Independence in English is being developed through the skills based curriculum and the involvement of pupils in self assessment but this is not yet fully embedded and there are missed opportunities for peer assessment in lessons.
- Reading circles and homework tasks encourage pupils to develop their personal research skills effectively and the school reporters enjoy the responsibility to write regularly about school events.
- Independent learning is limited in some lessons which are too teacher directed.

Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Good use is made of regular assessment and careful tracking to identify underachievement and target additional support, although there are inconsistencies in the use of this information to inform lesson planning.
- All staff have been trained in a range of literacy intervention programmes which are delivered effectively and having a positive impact on the improved standards and achievement in English.
- Focused visual literacy support for a targeted group of pupils in Year 3 has successfully raised their writing levels.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising attainment at Key Stage 1, particularly for girls and more able pupils in writing
- using assessment information to ensure lessons consistently provide sufficiently pace and challenge for all learners to make good progress and
- providing further opportunities for pupils to use ICT in lessons and to develop their independence.

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