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Mr I Barkley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Barkley

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 04 February 2008 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 satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English are average and the achievement of the pupils is satisfactory.

- Standards rose at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2007 and were average in reading and writing. The achievement of the pupils was satisfactory overall, but some pupils did not achieve the higher levels of which they were capable, particularly in writing.
- In the national tests in 2007, standards in English rose at the end of Key Stage 2 and were average overall, but were lower in writing than reading. The achievement of the pupils was satisfactory overall, but here too some did not achieve the higher levels of which they were capable.

- Standards in speaking and listening improve throughout the school. They are average overall and the pupils make good progress.
- English makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' personal development and well-being. The pupils appreciate the growing range of visits to the school by theatre companies and story tellers. They enjoy their work in English and speak enthusiastically about their lessons.

### Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- The best lessons are brisk, purposeful and challenging. In these lessons pupils are appropriately supported in their learning and stretched to improve their achievement. Occasionally the purpose of activities is not clear to the pupils.
- The teaching of early reading skills is good.
- The subject knowledge of the teachers is sound.
- Although pupils are well supported in their learning, they are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons, which accounts for their satisfactory rather than good progress.
- Marking is regular and informative. Although there are examples of good practice in giving pupils clear advice about how to improve their work, this is not consistent across the school.
- The school sets appropriate targets for the pupils in English and uses assessment to track their progress clearly. However, the pupils do not understand the targets sufficiently well.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and addresses the needs of the pupils.
- It is enriched by a growing range of activities in and out of school and by an increasing number of visitors to the school, such as theatre companies and story tellers.
- The school is beginning to create links between English and other subjects and to provide more opportunities for creativity, but this is at an early stage of development.
- Although there is some evidence of focus on writing in Year 6, opportunities for extended writing in real contexts in other year groups are not as well developed.

## Leadership and management of English

The quality of the leadership and management of English is satisfactory.

- The school has an accurate understanding of the areas of strength and for development in English.
- The new subject coordinator's ability to monitor and evaluate the work of the department and to plan strategically for improvement is developing well and is satisfactory.
- Strategic planning ensures that pupils receive satisfactory support in their learning, but more able pupils require further challenge.

## Independent learning in English

Independent learning in English is satisfactory.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their reading and the school library provides them with good opportunities to select their own choices.
- Speaking and listening and drama activities enable the pupils to make good progress in oral work.
- Pupils are encouraged to share their learning with one another which helps them to develop important skills in working collaboratively and independently.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is satisfactory.

- All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
- Robust systems for tracking the achievement of pupils ensures that those who require it receive support tailored to their needs.
- Some more able pupils do not achieve the higher grades of which they are capable.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that lessons have sufficient pace and challenge to enable the more able to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable
- providing more opportunities for writing throughout the school
- making sure that pupils understand their targets and what they must do to achieve them.

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

Andrew Harrett  
Her Majesty's Inspector