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Mrs S Ishaq
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ishaq

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 28 April to look at work 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: discussions with staff and pupils, observations of three lessons and an examination of some pupils' work and documents.

Features of good practice observed

- Pupils make good progress from starting points in the nursery which are very low. Many pupils move between schools, learn English as an additional language, or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Despite significant obstacles of this type, standards in English are usually in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. Writing lags behind reading, though recently improvements can be seen.
- Attitudes to learning are generally very good, although the boys' engagement and progress is sometimes slightly less impressive than the girls'.
- Pupils enjoy English because teachers make lessons lively and relevant. Teachers have high expectations and good understanding of how to help pupils tackle challenging work independently. This was illustrated well by an outstanding lesson which stimulated Year 5 to unlock the language of "Treasure Island" for themselves and left them eager to read more.
- Teachers plan work carefully to match their pupils' well-understood needs. Assessment is precise and accurate. The curriculum and teaching

approaches are constantly reviewed to sustain interest and match the changing needs of cohorts. Skills are taught discretely and practised in realistic contexts.

- Book Week visitors, reading clubs, graded book collections, and the engaging use of computers help pupils develop sound reading habits. Most of those spoken to read regularly, even if not out of school. They have well considered and distinctive reading preferences.
- Teachers manage a wide range of interventions carefully so that pupils have well focussed extra help, but are also fully involved in the main lesson. There were very good examples of effective support from well-briefed additional staff which encouraged pupils to articulate their ideas coherently before they write.
- The school's teaching of cognitive and emotional skills underpins pupils' readiness to take some creative risks. Pupils in Year 4 voiced their ideas and responses quite confidently when improvising about a dilemma. When Year 6 composed newspaper headlines, all showed a grasp of the conventions, but no two were alike.
- Pupils understand their personal objectives for writing and strive hard to reach them. Some very good marking and oral feedback from teachers made clear what pupils had achieved and what they needed to do next.
- Leadership and management have raised and sustained pupils' achievement in challenging circumstances. You and the phase and subject coordinators contribute distinctive strengths. Together you set a clear direction to which the capable and dedicated staff respond positively. Achievement and quality are monitored carefully, so the school is well aware of where pupils can do better. The school is open to new approaches, and rigorous in evaluating their impact.

Areas for development

- checking that boys' participation in discussion equals girls'.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Susan Bowles
Her Majesty's Inspector