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Ms M Carter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Carter

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 April 2008 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.

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 satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

- Standards are consistently below average at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the trend is upwards and results have improved faster than the national average in recent years.
- Standards are higher in reading than writing. The gap between boys' and girls' results in English is less than the national picture. Some groups of pupils perform well. For example, your Pakistani pupils reached higher standards last year than Pakistani pupils nationally.
- Achievement has also improved over the past three years and is satisfactory overall. The proportion of pupils making two levels of progress increased in 2007. Taking into account the particular needs of your majority of pupils for whom English is an additional language and low standards in English on entry to the school, some pupils make

good progress. For example, most pupils who were assessed as being on level 3 in 2007 had made good progress.

- Pupils behaved very well during lessons observed and were keen to learn. Their English lessons made a good contribution to their personal development through increasing their self confidence and providing opportunities for good collaborative work.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is reflected in the progress made by pupils and the school's own data, including lesson observations.
- There were good aspects of teaching in the lessons observed. Teachers formed good relationships with pupils and used patience and praise to motivate them.
- Teachers made good use of a wide range of strategies to engage pupils, including moving image texts and oral activities. Some classes were involved in interesting joint working. Some effective approaches to writing were also noted including Year 5 pupils writing real letters to the local council and Year 3 pupils producing their own non fiction text about birds.
- Opportunities were missed in some lessons to model writing and talk explicitly for pupils. Learning objectives were sometimes focused too much on the completion of activities and pace dipped from time to time, leading to some loss of concentration by some pupils.
- Marking was at least satisfactory and in some classes good. Most teachers give helpful feedback to pupils, sometimes linked to the learning aims or the pupils' targets. Consistent use is made of assessment criteria linked to National Curriculum levels in termly assessment pieces although too few teachers explain this to pupils in terms they can fully understand. As a result, some pupils were unsure about how to improve their work or could not remember their curricular targets.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is good.

- Pupils respond positively to the English curriculum and Year 6 pupils were especially enthusiastic about their lessons. The work scrutiny confirmed that most teachers provide a lively curriculum in English that motivates pupils well. Pupils' books contain a good range of interesting work, including some effective extended writing.
- The reading curriculum is especially good and results in positive pupil attitudes. Pupils enjoy the "Poem of the Day" and the class reader. The school provides regular time for independent reading and many

parents come into school to support this. The school has provided a wide range of good resources to support this work. The school is also well involved in local initiatives linked to the National Year of Reading.

- The school is currently focusing on improving writing and has broadened the range of approaches, including visual literacy, in order to motivate all pupils, especially those for whom English is an additional language.
- Lessons observed included some good oral activities. However, given the particular language needs of your pupils, speaking and listening does not feature significantly in subject improvement plans and too few units of work focus directly on this aspect of language development.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are good in English.

- Good leadership and management in English have resulted in steady improvements in standards and achievement and a good curriculum. However, as you acknowledge, standards need to be higher still.
- The school uses performance data very well to track the progress of pupils on a termly basis. Regular reviews of progress lead to careful planning of additional support. You use the performance data well to identify trends in achievement across the various groups in the school.
- This data is also used well to identify appropriate priorities for improvement. The subject development plan is well targeted although there is too little direct link to outcomes for learners, especially some of the under-achieving pupils in the school.
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is well managed and many of these pupils make good progress.
- You monitor teaching closely both through regular lesson observations and the review of pupils' books. This provides good feedback to staff about areas for development.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Your school receives a wide range of pupils from a variety of backgrounds, including some who enter the school with very little knowledge of English. Mobility is high. Despite this, pupils integrate well and relationships are good.
- Evidence suggests that some of the most vulnerable pupils make good progress, as referred to above. The school is able to provide good support within classes for pupils with EAL and this helps them to make progress. There is also a full programme of withdrawal carefully aimed at pupils with specific needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving standards in writing
- developing greater consistency in teaching including the use of modelling, clear learning objectives and sufficient pace to engage all pupils
- extending opportunities for pupils to talk at length within English lessons.

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

Philip Jarrett HMI  
Subject Adviser for English