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Ms A Charlton
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Charlton

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Bernard Campbell HMI on 09 June 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 six lessons or part lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and Standards

Standards in English are above average and achievement is good.

- Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average in English, particularly in reading.
- Results in national tests indicate that achievement is broadly good, although recently too few pupils have reached the highest levels in writing. This has been effectively addressed across all age groups, as confirmed by the school's assessments and the scrutiny of work.
- Evidence from lesson observations and discussions with pupils confirms that standards in English are above average. Pupils' oral communication skills are especially well developed. They show enthusiasm and understanding when talking about how they improve their writing.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English is good.

- Pupils enjoy lessons in English and their enthusiasm for discussion and writing reflects good teaching.
- Lessons observed were mostly good. Good relationships between adults and pupils underpinned the success of whole class and small group work. Stimulating and purposeful activities, often rooted in practical experience and involving talk, motivated pupils well. The most effective lessons successfully offered a high level of challenge to pupils. However, speaking and listening activities designed to prepare pupils for writing were not always sufficiently well structured.
- The sample of pupils' work showed good range and variety of challenge, including some ambitious journalistic writing.
- The school is currently developing its assessment practice. The best lessons were planned carefully to meet pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses. Teachers generally made the success criteria and the purpose of activities clear to pupils. Some effective ways of sharing targets with pupils are being tried. Marking identifies both successes and areas for improvement clearly and feedback is increasingly precise and helpful. As a result, pupils are clear about how to improve their work in English.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The school offers a wide range of enrichment activities that support work in English, including special events such as the outdoor learning week and an occasional school newspaper.
- There is good provision for reading. As well as promoting regular reading for pleasure at home, the school provides enjoyable experience of shared reading in school and there is effective intervention to support pupils with weaker reading skills.
- The programme for English is well balanced. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the encouragement they are given to take creative risks. As part of the current focus on writing, teachers provide regular opportunities for speaking and listening, for practising skills in realistic contexts, and for writing both independently and collaboratively. Planning for English connects constructively with thematic units which develop cross curricular links.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of the subject are good.

- You currently lead on English and your clear vision for the development of the subject is having a positive impact on provision across the school.
- Self evaluation in English is accurate and based on perceptive review of strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring is effectively focussed. The school has identified appropriate areas for improvement and progress on the improvement plan is kept under review. The enthusiastic staff are fully involved in trying new approaches. Their professional development has included some useful sharing of good practice. As a result, clear expectations for English teaching are being fulfilled with increasing confidence.
- The school tracks pupils' progress, making use of optional tests. The analysis of progress is not as effective as it might be in evaluating pupils' rate of progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- refining the analysis of assessment data in order to evaluate and accelerate pupils' progress
- improve the consistency with which speaking and listening activities to prepare pupils for writing are structured.

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