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Mrs S Caunter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Caunter

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 01 July 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 three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement in English is good. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6.

- In 2007, by the end of Year 2, pupils reached standards which were broadly average overall but stronger in reading than writing.
- In national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils reached standards that were above average with over half achieving Level 5. This was a distinct improvement on 2006 and the highest set of results for five years. Pupils made at least satisfactory and often good progress. Boys made similar progress to girls.
- The school's assessment information for 2008 indicates that current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are likely to match and, potentially, improve on the 2007 results. Pupils' performance in writing has improved as a result of the school's strong focus on strategies to extend pupils' ideas and widen their vocabulary.

- In the lessons seen on this visit, pupils made good progress. They worked well collaboratively, discussed their work in detail and responded positively to teachers' guidance.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, matching activities carefully to different levels of ability. Although lesson objectives are clear, they do not always emphasise sufficiently the skills that are to be learnt.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They use a good variety of approaches to engage pupils' interest and to help them learn, including drama approaches, visual stimuli, and frameworks to support their writing. Relationships are very good and pupils work with enthusiasm. However, they are not always encouraged to develop independence in their learning.
- The use of assessment in lessons is good. Teachers review pupils' work and progress regularly and involve them in looking at their own work and that of their peers.
- Teachers' marking is thorough and pupils understand the system which shows them where they have achieved their objectives and what they need to improve. They know their individual targets but are less clear how these are monitored and when they have achieved them.
- Activities in lessons are matched very closely to pupils' abilities and they receive effective support from teaching assistants, enabling those with learning difficulties to make generally good progress.

## Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The curriculum is broad and has a good range of opportunities for writing, including varieties of non-fiction. Poetry is included each term.
- There are increasing links between literacy and other subjects such as history which provide pupils with detailed information to use as a stimulus for writing.
- The school's emphasis on speaking, listening and drama activities is strong and has gained pupils' interest and improved their confidence.
- There is a good and increasing range of opportunities for pupils to be creative or work with writers and performers. These include film study and production, trips to local historic houses and study centres, a visiting poet and theatre company. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about these projects.
- There is a good programme of specific support for pupils at different levels of ability to help them improve particular aspects of their work. This has been especially successful with potentially higher achieving Year 6 pupils.

## Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and led to writing being an area for improvement in the last two years. Teachers have received good training from the local authority in using speaking and listening activities to stimulate writing. The focus this year has been on using visual stimuli to prompt ideas and writing.
- Pupils' progress is regularly and carefully tracked and the information is used effectively to identify those who would benefit from additional support.
- Senior staff know the quality of teaching well and have taken appropriate steps to bring about improvement where necessary.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that lesson objectives identify the skills to be learnt
- providing pupils with greater opportunities to work independently especially linked to the increasingly creative activities they experience.
- ensuring that pupils understand how their targets are reviewed and can relate this to their progress in English.

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

Martin Cragg  
Her Majesty's Inspector