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Mr S Clark  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Clark

### Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on the 04 July 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, analysis of pupils' work, observation of the Nursery and Reception classes and three other lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

### Achievement and standards

Standards in English are broadly average and achievement is good.

- Children start school with standards in communication, language and literacy which are well below expectations. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes. Standards at the end of Reception show some year-on year variation but are below those generally seen in language for communication and thinking, reading and particularly in writing.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Historically standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2. In 2007, standards dipped to below average in reading and well below average in writing. This group of pupils experienced a number of staff changes. They have since made significant progress in Year 3 and are now working at appropriate levels. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain their targets.

- In 2007, pupils made satisfactory progress in English across Key Stage 2 and attained average standards. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain similar standards. When viewed over their whole time in school, pupils achieve well.
- Pupils who find learning more difficult and those pupils for whom English is an additional language also achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy English and display good attitudes to the subject in lessons. Young children show increasing confidence in talking with adults and each other.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English is good.

- Teachers across the school share many strengths. Teachers know the pupils well and have good relationships with them. Classrooms have a positive ethos. There is strong teamwork with other adults and teaching assistants.
- In the lower part of the school, teachers manage learning particularly well. There is careful imaginative planning with a clear focus and balance of child and adult initiated activities. Creative play opportunities reinforce and provide multiple ways to support their language development. Classrooms are rich in language resources. There is careful tracking of pupils' reading and phonic knowledge.
- Management of learning in English is not so strong in the upper part of the school because there is not the same degree of consistency. For example, there is good encouragement for independent reading through the 'author of the week' in some classes but use of the reading log is variable. In addition, teachers do not always have a clear enough view of what they want pupils to get out of the lesson in order to improve their work or deepen their response. The learning objective is often defined by the task to be undertaken.
- Marking is up-to-date and includes positive comments. There are inconsistent approaches across classes about whether work is to be assessed against levels, or referenced to targets or success criteria, and the degree to which the next steps needed for improvement are to be identified.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is good.

- There are good enrichment opportunities in English through visiting storytellers, authors, puppeteers and drama groups as well as participation in school productions and media work. Assembly and other school contexts, such as the 'weather centre,' provide good opportunities for pupils to present their work to an audience. There are good opportunities to use ICT.

- The English curriculum in the lower school is rich and fosters pupils' skills and imagination well. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' phonic skills. The curriculum in the upper school is appropriately broad and ensures that pupils cover the full range of experiences in English, including the use of whole class texts and exploring aspects of the media.
- The school has identified the fostering of independent reading skills and refurbishment of class and school library as a priority in the next year. The school is developing the curriculum by linking subjects together into themes and teachers are beginning to exploit the flexibility of the new framework to provide meaningful contexts for English work.
- There are relevant intervention programmes to support pupils and help increase their confidence and skills. There is good support for pupils with English as an additional language.

### Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- Self-evaluation is good. The school's leadership has accurately identified the key strategic needs in order to take the subject forward.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the use and analysis of data to track pupils' performance, to identify slippage and ensure that pupils continue to achieve well. There are regular progress meetings to decide the best way forward for individuals. The school is very inclusive in approach and has responded effectively to the changing nature of its intake.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that teachers are very clear about what exactly it is that they want pupils to gain from the lesson, expressed in precise learning objectives
- developing consistent approaches to assessment and identifying what pupils need to do in order to improve their work.

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

Roderick Passant  
Additional Inspector

