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Mr J Day  
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Ofsted subject survey: good practice in English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 07 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: the observation of one lesson illustrating the use of film in English, meetings with staff and students, and examples of students' writing.

Features of good practice observed

- The department provides a varied and stimulating curriculum which increasingly draws on popular culture and a range of media to build on students' interests and knowledge.
- Skilful teaching challenges both boys and girls, notably through well-managed and purposeful speaking and listening activities which lead to thoughtful writing.
- The department is using the study of short films as part of its strategy to improve the engagement of boys in Key Stage 3. Boys say they really like the classroom discussions and activities. They use the language of film making with enthusiasm. As teachers have noted, this is having a positive effect on the length and quality of their discursive and creative writing. Among sixth form students, discussion of films has stimulated wider reading, too.
- The leadership of the large English team is reflective and outward-looking and this helps teachers to enrich their expertise and share good practice

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