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14 October 2008

Mr M Schumm
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Schumm

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 09 October to look at work in English.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject the visit included a focus on our current survey theme of creativity 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 two lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding. Standards are well above average.

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. All groups of pupils achieve equally well and make at least good progress.
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1 in 2007, attainment in reading and writing was broadly average, despite considerable diversity and almost 40% of pupils having English as an additional language. At Key Stage 2, progress accelerates rapidly. Results at Level 4 have been above or well above average for several years and show outstanding attainment at Level 5, almost doubling the national average in 2007. Unvalidated data for 2008 show continuing high standards, although at Key Stage 1 the attainment of girls in writing exceeded that of boys.

- Standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils are confident and articulate speakers. They are critical and reflective listeners and respect and value the views of others.
- English makes an outstanding contribution to the personal development of pupils, notably through collaborative and pair work, opportunities to contribute orally to lessons, and from an effective school council that influences provision, such as in 'buddy' reading between pupils in Year 6 and children in the Reception year.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Lessons observed were outstanding and secured at least good progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a wide range of strategies and good quality resources, including technology, to make lessons challenging and interesting. Sessions are carefully planned and differentiated so that work is well matched to need; objectives are clear; skills are carefully and thoroughly taught; and effective questioning is used well to further learning.
- Assessment of learning informs planning increasingly well, and regular and accurate moderation ensures consistency in teacher assessment. Pupils are set challenging targets, the progress of individuals is monitored and tracked well and underachievement supported promptly. Careful, thorough and supportive marking helps pupils to improve, although with some inconsistency.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and promote positive and independent attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy English. They are keen to learn, work hard, persevere with tasks, apply what they have been taught effectively and achieve well.
- Good provision for speaking and listening provides regular opportunities for presentations. Pupils talk openly and well, they enjoy discussion and are confident about expressing their own ideas.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good with outstanding features.

- The English curriculum is carefully structured for breadth, balance and progression and subject to regular review and evaluation so that teachers build on pupils' knowledge and skills systematically.
- Very high quality displays in classrooms and corridors reinforce literacy and cross-curricular links are strengthening well. Good resources from a range of cultures and beliefs offer a broad experience of literature.
- A good range of enrichment activities includes outstanding provision for drama that engages pupils very well.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Effective leadership ensures consistently good provision and secures high standards.
- There is a clear sense of direction for English with well chosen priorities, good planning for improvement and robust arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.
- Performance data are analysed well and contribute to improvement.
- Good provision for professional development includes support staff who contribute significantly to learning.
- Expectations for all pupils to achieve well are high and the school secures inclusion very successfully. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff contributes well to the good rate of progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties. Well targeted and well delivered interventions and careful tracking of progress show good gains in learning for targeted pupils.

Creativity in English

- Creativity and the celebration of originality permeate English very strongly. Outstanding provision includes: explicit planning for creativity in all aspects of English, such as very good provision for drama; promotion through assemblies; effective use of media and creative practitioners; good opportunities for independence and critical reflection.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to raise standards as identified by the school.

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

Rosemary Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector