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25 March 2009

Mr M Land
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Dear Mr Land

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 February 2009 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is good. Standards are above average.

- Children start the Early Years Foundation stage with below average scores for communication, language and literacy. They make good progress and reach national expectations on entry to Year 1. This good progress continues, so that by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average.
- At Key Stage 2, standards are also above average but at Level 5 in 2008 attainment in reading far exceeded that for writing.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

- Strong emphasis on speaking and listening secures good standards. Pupils listen to each other well and speak clearly and fluently with good regard to audience and purpose.
- Good provision for personal development, including through the school council, in assemblies led by pupils and from opportunities for collaboration, makes an especially strong contribution to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Planning secures good progress. Objectives and outcomes are clear, learning is sequenced well and skills are taught systematically.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, provide interesting and engaging activities, use good quality resources effectively and develop learning through good use of questioning.
- Independent learning is encouraged through good opportunities for speaking and listening and collaboration in particular, although some pupils are slow to engage in independent activities.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well, contribute eagerly to lessons and enjoy their learning.
- Assessment is used well to match work to need and to engage pupils in their learning. Writing is levelled accurately and some very careful marking gives pupils a clear picture of how to improve, but with some inconsistency.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The thematic, skills-based curriculum that includes good use of the renewed framework for literacy, secures breadth, balance and progression in classes where pupils are of mixed age and have a considerable range of learning needs. The strong focus on speaking and listening and collaborative work supports learning well.
- Provision for cultural diversity is satisfactory, as is provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The latter is used increasingly well to enhance learning.
- Assessment informs planning well. Interesting and stimulating tasks in lessons, enrichment activities that are linked closely to topics and the newly implemented creative family writing project that successfully involves parents in home learning, secure good progress.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are good.

- A clear sense of direction for English, strong leadership and good teamwork secure good provision and above average standards.
- The school has an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Planning for improvement is good and priorities are targeted well. Well considered professional development is securing priorities effectively and investment in support staff enables them to make a sound contribution to learning.
- Provision is monitored and evaluated carefully and regularly.
- Inclusion is promoted strongly. Data are used well to target interventions, secure progress and raise attainment. The good focus on careful and systematic tracking is contributing clearly to improvement, notably in focused discussions with pupils about targets and next steps for learning.

Creativity in English

- Creativity, and the creation of relevant contexts for pupils' writing in particular, is considered carefully in planning for English.
- The Spellbrook family writing project offers pupils good opportunities for extended writing, engages parents successfully and is supported well by governors.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continue to raise standards in writing
- strengthen the curriculum to include more provision for cultural diversity, increased use of ICT and a greater focus on independent learning.

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