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Miss R Stokes
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Stokes

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 06 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 three lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards are well above average and achievement is good.

- Pupils make good progress in English and achieve well over their time in the school. Standards are generally well above average in the Year 6 national tests. In 2008, the characteristics of the cohort meant that standards of attainment showed a dip in the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level but nearly all pupils made two levels of progress since Year 2. Standards of reading are higher than standards in writing.
- Currently, Year 6 pupils are on track to meet challenging targets and are making good progress.
- Standards in Year 2 English teacher assessments are above average in reading and writing.

- Pupils who have difficulties with their learning make good progress because of the quality of support they receive. You keep a close eye on the relative performance of boys and girls, particularly important given that there is a significant gender imbalance in one or two classes.
- English makes a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of learning. They are motivated and want to do well. Pupils enjoy reading and Year 6 pupils were confident and articulate as they talked about their favourite authors.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English across the school is good.

- Members of staff are experienced and have very good relationships with the pupils. Classroom management is skilled and lessons carefully planned to meet the needs of the pupils. There is good teamwork with the teaching assistants. The result is that classrooms have a productive ethos and pupils work with concentration.
- Teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and pupils are often involved in identifying the success criteria of the lesson. Lessons move on at a good pace. In one lesson with very young children, a variety of well-chosen and well-timed segments of activity, linked by a strong thread of fun and play, helped children make good progress.
- Teachers listen attentively to pupils' answers to their questions and are prepared to ask further questions to deepen that response. Lessons provide good contexts to develop the inter-relationship of speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Marking is supportive and generally indicates aspects where the work might be improved. It shows improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the English curriculum is good.

- There are good links with other subjects, which along with the enrichment from trips and visitors provide good opportunities for pupils to use their English skills in a variety of contexts.
- Members of staff are using the new literacy framework, utilising greater flexibility by adapting it and making it their own. The curriculum provides a good range of English experiences including work on the media and drama. The work on Romeo and Juliet and the associated theatre trip had clearly caught the imagination of Year 6 pupils.
- Reading has a high profile in the school because there are regular timetable opportunities for personal reading. The paired reading programme is an important and successful ingredient.

Leadership and management of English

The leadership and management of English are good.

- There is close teamwork between you and the English co-ordinators. Your self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and what needs to be done is accurate.
- You set challenging targets, linked to performance management, which are raising expectations further, particularly with regard to the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5. You base your targets on careful analysis of external and school data. You monitor closely the progress pupils are making, including the transition from Reception into Year 1, allowing you to identify pupils who are slipping behind and target them with support.
- In the past, pupils' progress has needed to accelerate in the upper part of the school to maintain standards. The current monitoring arrangements help ensure more consistent progress. The effectiveness of this monitoring depends on the accuracy of the assessment information and members of staff's understanding of how this information is used in determining targets, not only for end of key stage standards but for pupils' year-on-year progress.
- In the upper part of the school, 'Big Write' approaches are used to raise standards in writing. The phonics programme, introduced into the Early Years Foundation Stage, has led to significant improvement in reading and the impact of the programme is now moving through Key Stage 1.
- The school is very inclusive, providing good support to pupils with specific difficulties.

Creativity in English

Year 6 pupils clearly enjoy using their imagination and having the opportunities to write their own stories and descriptions. School productions, the work on *Romeo and Juliet* and the role-play in the Telford museum had caught their interest. The school clearly develops the creative opportunities associated with its enrichment programme. The Forest School outdoor area is used well to foster young children's imagination, for example, the nursery children trekking off in the snow on their 'bear hunt'. The Severn *Sabrina Project* culminating in the torchlight procession was clearly a major school event which was a catalyst for creative English work.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to develop staff understanding of assessment data and the implications for their contribution to pupils' year-on-year progress.

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

Rod Passant
Additional Inspector