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Mrs E Stanley-Wainwright
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Dear Mrs Stanley-Wainwright

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 May 2009 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, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards in English are currently above average.

- Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with expectations. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have generally been average, showing satisfactory achievement. Most pupils achieve the nationally expected level in English but too few reach the higher Level 5.
- Results for Year 6 pupils rose significantly in 2008. Over 90% of pupils achieved the expected level and around one third reached Level 5. This represents above average standards. Pupils' achievement in English also improved and pupils exceeded the challenging targets set for them last year. Lesson observations confirmed good levels of current progress.
- The school recognises that standards are much higher in reading than in writing. Recent changes led to better results in writing in 2008. Nevertheless, the gap remains wide. Nearly two thirds of pupils

achieve Level 5 in reading; only a small number do so in writing. Boys perform significantly less well than girls in writing.

- There are no substantial differences in achievement between other groups of pupils in the school.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English is good.

- Most pupils enjoy English lessons, especially where learning is active. They are enthusiastic about reading. However, many pupils lack confidence in writing.
- There were good features to teaching in all lessons observed. Relationships with pupils were consistently good and lessons were very well planned. Teachers tried hard to match activities to the learning needs of groups of pupils. Lessons were lively and well paced and this helped to engage pupils. Teachers used interesting topics that linked learning in English to other areas of the curriculum and provided pupils with opportunities for first hand experience. A good range of resources was used to motivate pupils. All classes benefited from considerable levels of support from teaching assistants.
- Evidence from lessons confirmed that some pupils struggle with writing and at times they needed further support and guidance. Activities were invariably well chosen although teachers sometimes needed to be clearer about the learning outcomes for these activities.
- Pupils are involved in setting their own curricular targets in English. This works well. In addition, the best marking gives pupils clear guidance on areas of strength and weakness. However, some pupils did not know how to improve their work. This is because some of the feedback from teachers is less explicit about the next steps in their learning and because written comments too rarely relate to the curricular targets identified.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is good.

- The school's leadership is clear both about the purpose and aims of the whole curriculum and the contribution of English to pupils' learning.
- The school has planned a lively curriculum that links English directly with cross curricular topics and engages pupils well. Teachers are encouraged to find opportunities for English work in pupils' first hand experiences and to provide real purposes and audiences for their writing and talking.
- The reading curriculum is particularly effective and leads to generally high standards. The school's policy includes regular opportunities for teachers to listen to children reading and to assess their progress, planned guided reading sessions, and encouragement for pupils to

extend their reading outside school. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and make good progress.

- There are also positive elements to the school's approach to writing although standards are not yet as high. Pupils are encouraged to draft and note ideas in their jotters. There are frequent opportunities for extended writing and regular sessions on spelling and handwriting. The school also publishes collections of pupils' writing.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is well used in English, especially to enable pupils to produce a range of moving image work including films.
- The school's commitment to a more creative curriculum is signalled in its involvement in a Creative Partnerships project that gives older pupils opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and to use a variety of drama techniques.

Leadership and management of English

The leadership and management of English are good.

- The school has a very strong sense of direction to work in English. Clear guidance is provided to teachers about expectations in the subject, including approaches to teaching and the use of ICT.
- The school analyses performance data well and has used this to identify the need to improve standards of writing. The action taken has begun to result in better test results.
- The subject is well managed and promoted by a hard working and enthusiastic subject leader. Despite the numerous other calls on her time in your very small school, she provides very good leadership in English. She has a good understanding of the role and provides support and training for others together with good quality analysis of performance data and effective monitoring of provision.
- Monitoring and evaluation are based on a wide range of approaches including lesson observation, work sampling and discussions with pupils.
- Pupils' progress is tracked well and the school is able to identify under-performance for particular groups of pupils including the higher attaining pupils and the small number who receive free school meals. Progress is reviewed systematically through regular review meetings with all teachers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising standards in writing, especially for boys and the higher attaining pupils
- developing pupils' understanding of how to improve their work through more consistent feedback on progress, especially against their curricular targets.

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

Philip Jarrett HMI
Subject Adviser for English