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Dear Miss Davies

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 September 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 spelling and handwriting.

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 and short visits to two others.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Pupils' attainment in English is above average overall. However, in Key Stage 2, attainment in writing is not as good as in reading. The school's records and test results show that, although most pupils reach the national expectation of Level 4 by the end of Year 6, relatively few pupils are working securely at an above-average standard for their age.

- In each key stage, the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make in English are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly good progress, with a good number of them reaching an average standard.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They work hard and enjoy learning. The older pupils relish challenging work.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Observation of lessons, discussions with teachers, examination of monitoring records and the evidence of pupils' progress show that teaching is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good and behaviour is managed well.
- Lessons are planned well and include clear objectives for pupils' learning, which take account of day-to-day assessment of their progress.
- Teachers often present work in ways that appeal to pupils, including using information and communication technology as an integral part of lessons. However, there are occasions when pupils' interest and attention are not captured or held fully.
- The quality of marking is generally good. Teachers usually make suggestions for improvement but these are not always sufficiently precise.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- Throughout the school, the curriculum is carefully and coherently planned. It meets national requirements, matches pupils' needs and appeals to their interests.
- There are examples of imaginative approaches, such as covering a range of writing activities in a project related to an imaginary setting.
- Pupils have good opportunities for performance in drama and public speaking.
- Pupils who are competent readers continue to receive helpful guidance to extend their independent reading.
- There is a good range of effective support for pupils who need extra help.
- Senior staff are taking a considered approach to developing the use of literacy skills in cross-curricular work and are at an early stage of whole-school planning for this.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management of the provision in English are good.

- Expectations are high. There is a determination to raise standards further and key staff have a reflective and outward looking approach in their efforts for continuous improvement.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment and the monitoring of their progress have become more thorough and consistent in recent years.
- Planning for development and improvement is sound. The subject leader is clear about what will be done across the school this year, with the aim of raising pupils' attainment.

Spelling and handwriting

- The school has policies on the teaching of spelling and handwriting. Expectations are clear and these aspects of writing are taught systematically throughout the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for learning to spell words they have spelt incorrectly.
- By Year 6, pupils generally spell with a good degree of accuracy and have developed a reasonably fluent cursive style of handwriting.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing the proportion of pupils who reach an above average standard for their age in writing by the end of Year 6
- strengthening planning for the use and development of literacy skills, particularly writing, across the curriculum.

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

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector