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Mrs Booth
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Booth

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 January 2010 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 provision for gifted and talented pupils 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 included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of two lessons and short visits to another three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment is now higher than that seen in the 2009 national tests at Key Stage 2. The majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to attain the standards expected for their age, and a few are set to achieve better than that.
- In most year groups pupils are making at least good, often extremely good, progress in reading and writing. They are well on the way to meeting the challenging targets set for the end of each year. However, the school's records and pupils' books show a pocket of weaker progress for many pupils in the middle of Key Stage 2.

- Pupils generally make better progress in reading, and speaking and listening, than in writing. Nevertheless, in 2009, the Year 2 pupils were further behind the national average in reading than in writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do very well, as do any other pupils at risk of low attainment or underachievement. Well-focused early interventions and continuing support enable these pupils to narrow the attainment gap.
- Progress in learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding from a low starting point.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Most of the teaching is at least good and some is of an outstanding quality.
- Staff generally have the high level teaching skills required to enable pupils to achieve the very high expectations set.
- Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives for pupils at all ability levels. Planning is supported well by close day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning to set targets for each pupil.
- Lessons progress at a suitably brisk pace and teachers use information and communication technology well to support teaching and learning and to add interest to lessons.
- When teaching is less effective, there is less challenge for pupils, the pace of learning is slower, and marking and target-setting are less precise.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum covers all that is required. It is planned to ensure progression in pupils' learning and is enriched by a range of visits and visitors. Work is often presented imaginatively and pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- There are several good examples of literacy skills being used and developed well across subjects.
- There has been significant recent investment in library books. Pupils enjoy reading and name favourite books and authors. However, the school could do more to promote wider independent reading systematically for all pupils.
- The school does not currently run any extra-curricular clubs related to English.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- There is a determined drive for consistently high quality teaching to enable pupils to make accelerated progress and reach the standards expected for their age. This is shared by the senior team and the subject leader and has a very positive impact on achievement.
- Very rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and good evaluation of the effectiveness of additional support underpin the clear and well-focused planning for further improvement.
- Staff benefit from a good level of additional training, for example in the teaching of reading.

Subject issue: Provision for gifted and talented pupils in English

Staff have identified pupils who are gifted or talented in English, mainly in reading. They have included pupils who are not performing at an above-average level but are believed to have the potential to do so. Provision for these pupils is generally through the match of work to their needs in class lessons and the provision of open-ended tasks which they can respond to at a high level. Results show that the school's most able pupils attain highly. There are few enrichment activities targeted specifically at these pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- raising attainment, especially in reading in Key Stage 1 and writing in Key Stage 2
- improving teaching where it is less than good
- strengthening the curriculum, in particular the range of provision beyond lessons and the guidance for pupils' wider independent reading.

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 and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector