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Mrs G Davies
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Davies

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 8 March 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; observations of three lessons; and short visits to a further six lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Children's starting point when they join the school in the Reception class is above average. They make good progress in each key stage. Their rates of progress reflect the predominantly good quality of teaching.
- Attainment is high. Last year's leavers reached well above average standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in the current Year 6 are equally high, with the majority of pupils on course to reach the standard expected for their age and around half set to exceed that standard.

- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well. They benefit from good support and additional teaching which is well-tailored to their particular needs.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes are a great aid to their learning. They are attentive and industrious in lessons and show a strong commitment to achievement.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- All of the teaching is at least satisfactory, most is good and some is of an outstanding quality. Pupils say that their teachers make learning fun and present new work in a variety of ways so that everyone can learn successfully.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and, in most lessons, teachers maintain a highly purposeful and productive atmosphere. When the teaching observed was at its best, there was a buzz of enthusiasm and a sense of pupils and staff working together to achieve high-quality work.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Expectations are consistently high and all pupils, whatever their ability, are challenged. The difference between the satisfactory and better teaching observed was primarily in the pace of learning.
- In the good and better lessons, teaching was lively and interesting. Teachers used information and communication technology (ICT) well to support teaching and learning. In whole-class discussions at the end of lessons, they reinforced key new learning, introduced additional challenges and whetted pupils' appetites for future lessons.
- In the more effective lessons, pupils' progress was supported very successfully by their high level of involvement in evaluating their own learning. Such good use of assessment for learning is not yet consistent across classes.
- Marking of pupils' work and the ensuing identification of targets for the next steps in their learning are good overall but not of a consistent quality in all classes.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is planned well to ensure progression in all aspects of English. Good attention is given to drama and ICT has a secure place within English work. The use and development of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, through cross-curricular topics, are planned soundly.
- Phonic skills are covered well with the younger pupils and are continued as necessary in Key Stage 2. This good provision contributes significantly to pupils' improved attainment and confidence by the end of Key Stage 1.

- The range of additional activities, such as extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum in English, though adequate, is somewhat limited.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- There is a strong, enthusiastic drive for continuous improvement. This is seen, for example, in the good monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, good support for staff, especially teachers who are new to the profession, and good planning for subject development.
- There is an overall subject leader and a teacher who leads English in Key Stage 1. These teachers work in close partnership and both provide a good model for staff.
- You give high priority to developing pupils' literacy skills, take an active and informed interest in the subject, and support the subject leaders well.

Provision for gifted and talented pupils in English

- The school has suitable arrangements for identifying gifted and talented pupils, though most of these pupils are able readers rather than talented writers. For the most part, these pupils are challenged appropriately by demanding work in lessons. Gifted and talented pupils have good, planned opportunities to develop a mature independence in their work. There are few planned enrichment activities aimed specifically at these pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- extending the provision of activities to enrich the curriculum, such as visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs
- developing the use of assessment further to ensure consistency across the school and to maximise pupils' involvement.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I explained previously, 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