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Mrs L Boyle  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Boyle

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 22 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 four lessons; and short visits to a further three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- When children start the school, their attainment is broadly average. They make good, though uneven, progress. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. By the time they leave, pupils' attainment is higher than average.
- In the present Year 6, the large majority of pupils are working at the standard expected for their age and around a fifth are doing better than that. Throughout the school, pupils do better at reading than writing. Nonetheless, attainment in writing has begun to improve in response to a more structured approach to teaching this aspect of the subject.

- Last year's leavers' results in the national tests were below average. However, the results did not match the standards pupils had reached in class, which were considerably higher.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress particularly well. They benefit from support in lessons and additional teaching which are well-tailored to their particular needs.
- Pupils want to achieve well. They like being able to measure their progress, lesson by lesson, against clear learning objectives and their individual targets. However, in a small but not insignificant minority of lessons observed, pupils' demanding behaviour and lack of sustained attention hindered the atmosphere for learning.

### Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Pupils' progress over time shows that the teaching is effective. The lessons seen on this visit were a mix of good and satisfactory teaching.
- The most effective lessons observed were brisk and purposeful. Expectations were high and pupils were clear about what they were to learn. Teachers skilfully adapted the work to meet the full range of pupils' abilities and kept all pupils fully involved in learning.
- The shortcomings in the satisfactory lessons were mainly related to a slower pace, less effective management of pupils' behaviour, and less close tailoring of work to pupils' different learning needs.
- In Year 6, class teaching is supported by additional individual support for a minority of pupils whose progress has slipped. This is helping them to catch up.
- Pupils have helpful individual learning targets and their work is marked constructively, often with a clear indication of what to concentrate on to improve.

### Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum covers all that is required. It is planned to ensure progression in all aspects of the subject and there are some very good examples of work in other subjects using and developing pupils' literacy skills.
- Phonic skills are covered but not always with sufficient precision or challenge.
- Pupils have a good range of planned opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and to participate in drama. For example, in Year 5 they produce radio plays. Information and communication technology and media are integrated well into work in English. For

instance, during this visit, Year 4 pupils were working in pairs to create trailers for a film.

- The curriculum is enriched well with clubs, visitors and visits. Pupils have worked at the city art gallery, using story boxes to stimulate writing, and they have created story boards in a workshop with a visiting author.

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Two teachers lead English. They work in a close and effective partnership and provide models of good teaching for staff.
- There is a strong drive for continuous improvement, which you lead well. You and the subject leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in the provision and sound plans for improvement.
- Pupils' progress is monitored closely and teachers are held responsible for it. Interventions to accelerate learning are planned carefully to meet individuals' needs and are kept under review.

#### Provision for gifted and talented pupils in English

The school has appropriate arrangements and guidance for identifying gifted and talented pupils. These pupils are generally suitably challenged in lessons and they have some good opportunities to develop independence in their work. There are planned opportunities for these pupils to work together on projects for instance, writing contributions to school newsletters.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further raise attainment in writing
- improving the quality of the teaching that is currently satisfactory to good to improve the consistency of pupils' progress
- improving the teaching of phonic skills

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