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Mr D Crunkhurn
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Crunkhurn

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 4 October 2010 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; a phonics learning walk; and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 last summer was outstanding with the percentage of pupils meeting or exceeding much higher than average expected levels. Reading was especially strong with most pupils achieving the higher level.
- In Key Stage 2, both attainment and the progress that pupils make in reading and writing have seen an improving trend over the last three years. Last year's Year 6 pupils demonstrated particularly good progress with all making the expected progress and almost half exceeding this. Although the quality of writing is good, there are weaknesses in handwriting and pupils' presentation of their work.

- Attainment in Key Stage 1 is above average in reading, where almost all pupils achieved the expected level. Attainment is average in writing. The school recognises the need to increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in both reading and writing at the end of Year 2. Progress is good overall in reading and writing across Key Stage 1.
- The small numbers of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from average starting points in communication, language and literacy, although writing is a weaker area.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because effective assessment and tracking systems identify weaknesses early and good-quality intervention programmes are put in place to support such pupils. As a result, they catch up quickly and make good progress.
- Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes towards English. They say that they enjoy their lessons and are equally enthusiastic about reading and writing. A particular strength is speaking and listening where standards are always good and sometimes outstanding.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Good teaching, with some outstanding aspects, was observed during the inspection. Features of the most successful teaching included:
 - flexible planning which takes full account of the wide range of ages and abilities in each class and which demonstrates a good awareness of the need to match teaching to pupils' wide-ranging learning styles.
 - teachers' good subject knowledge and effective use of teaching assistants to support learning.
 - teachers' incisive and searching questioning to ensure that pupils have an ongoing understanding of what they are learning.
 - imaginative and well-resourced teaching which motivates pupils effectively.
 - excellent relationships and good behaviour management techniques which help to ensure a good pace in lessons
- Although only good or better teaching was observed during the inspection, sometimes learning slowed when the pace of the lesson slackened as a result of pupils having too long on one task.
- Assessment systems are effective and accurate. Assessment data are - used well during lessons and to inform medium-term planning. Written work is marked well and pupils are aware of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Good assessment practice has also had a positive impact on raising the standards of boys' writing.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is good.

- The English curriculum is planned well, broad and balanced. The themed approach adopted by the school means that links are clear with other subjects and progression in the development of skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening is logical. This has encouraged less successful groups, such as boys, to improve.
- Careful curriculum planning, a commitment to inclusion and the wide range of ages and abilities in each class help to ensure that transition between key stages is very much moulded to the needs of individual pupils.
- Curriculum enrichment has a strong emphasis which helps generate positive attitudes towards all aspects of English. For example, the high profile of drama is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm for school plays, musical productions and theatre visits.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- Your enthusiasm and dedication, supported by the subject coordinator, is having a positive impact on English in helping to drive improvement and inspire pupils and staff. Although a number of recent developments have yet to be fully embedded, there are strong indications of improving trends.
- English teaching and pupils' learning are carefully monitored. Assessment systems are rigorous and effective in measuring pupils' attainment and progress. The school moderates their judgements internally and with other schools, and this helps to ensure that they are accurate.
- Subject improvement plans are well-conceived and use a range of data to identify suitable priorities and plan actions to tackle them. However, criteria to identify when these actions have been successful do not always indicate with sufficient clarity how progress will be measured against outcomes for pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1
- improving standards of handwriting and presentation
- ensuring that success criteria in English plans identify, where appropriate, measureable outcomes for pupils.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector