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Mrs M Barrington
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Barrington

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 21 March 2013 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; and observation of seven part lessons, four of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English is good.

- Pupils' attainment has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Attainment in reading is particularly high. Throughout the school, attainment is higher in reading than writing. In 2012, although boys' attainment was below that of the girls, it was above the national average in reading and writing. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress because lessons are well planned to match their learning needs. Nevertheless, younger pupils would benefit from phonics teaching in smaller groups matched to their abilities.
- Pupils enjoy English lessons. They behave well and particularly enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively together. They willingly share ideas

and enjoy taking part in evaluating each other's work. They take care with their work and make good progress because lessons meet their individual needs and activities are lively and interesting.

Teaching in English is good.

- There is a positive climate for learning in classrooms. Teachers' good planning of interesting and stimulating tasks actively engages pupils. Relationships are good, additional adults are deployed appropriately and classrooms are well organised, supporting pupils' learning effectively through interesting and helpful displays to excite and interest them.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are mainly helpful, providing guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. In the best examples, pupils respond to the marking comments and show the improvement they have made.
- On-going assessment techniques, such as questioning by teachers, support pupils learning well by probing their understanding and extending their thinking. Regular assessment of pupils' achievement in reading and writing informs teaching. In the best lessons, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to share their work with one another. Pupils enjoy 'magpie-ing' ideas to improve their learning.

Targets for improvement in writing are set and pupils are involved in agreeing their targets. However, they are not always aware of the progress they are making or when they have reached their target because they do not know where they are in the bigger picture of their learning journey.

The curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum is carefully planned. It is broad and covers a good range of speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. Teachers involve pupils in shaping the plans to ensure the interests of boys and girls are well reflected. Pupils are enthusiastic about the increased use of drama and role play. They particularly like the 'Kung Fu' actions, which help them to remember to use a wide range of punctuation correctly in their writing.
- A suitable range of additional activities enhances pupils' experiences. Reading is promoted well and pupils regularly read at home. During the recent book week, pupils considered unusual places to be 'caught reading' and produced photographs to show their imaginative ideas. They are enthusiastic about sharing their experiences of reading and confidently articulate why they particularly like the work of their favourite authors.

Leadership and management of English are good.

- Senior leaders work effectively together. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in English and develop suitable plans to support improvements. Staff undertake an appropriate amount of training to develop their skills.

- Staff work well together and there is a clear commitment and a common purpose to achieve further improvement. Through a range of activities to check on the quality of teaching, high expectations are communicated well. As a result, there is a consistency of approach to supporting pupils' learning. Classrooms are well-organised with interesting displays and 'learning walls' to support pupils' learning in lessons.
- Recent changes to the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress have hampered senior leaders' use of this information. Leaders are aware that the analysis of this data is necessary to ensure that strategies that are adopted are having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making more effective use of targets to enable pupils to know the full range of skills and knowledge within the level they are working, with teachers checking consistently on pupils' progress towards achieving their targets
- analysing the information on pupil's attainment and progress to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used to increase pupils' progress, particularly in writing.

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

As 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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector