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Mrs A Phillips
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Dear Mrs Phillips

Ofsted survey inspection programme - English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 November 2006 to look at work in English.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject the visit had a particular focus on our current survey theme: provision for poetry. 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 made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement in English are good.

- Pupils of all ages make good progress in the school and unconfirmed results for 2006 show that at the end of Year 2, standards of reading and writing were just above the national average. Pupils also make good progress in speaking and listening. Girls do better than boys, particularly in writing.
- The school's data shows that many children, particularly boys, have much ground to make up when they enter the reception class. Standards at the end of the reception year remain below what is expected for the age group.

- The school's data shows that boys make slower progress than girls initially but their progress accelerates as they move through the school and is good overall. All groups of pupils make good progress and some with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress.
- Pupil's personal development is very good. They behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work. Most pupils enjoy English, particularly reading. They understand about eating healthily, helped by their reading.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

Teaching and learning are good.

- Teaching is consistent across all the classes. An excellent strategy is "steps to success" which are shared with all pupils at the beginning of a task so that they know how to succeed. Each pupil has learning objectives, tailor made, and all pupils understand these. Currently, the objectives focus mainly upon handwriting, spelling and grammar, not lively writing.
- Children are encouraged to write freely in the reception class so they approach writing confidently as they see themselves as writers.
- Interesting topics are chosen that appeal to boys. Resources are used well and are often bright and attractive. There is a strong focus on reading.
- Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to become independent learners who know how to seek out information and to evaluate their work.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well, planning ahead with the teachers.
- Speaking and listening, reading and writing are assessed effectively.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is good.

- The curriculum meets the needs of all learners well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided for effectively and the school actively seeks resources for the children who arrive with little English.
- A major strength in the curriculum is the morning session of *Book and Biscuit* which involves parents sharing a book and a biscuit with the children. The sessions are well attended and successful.
- Curriculum planning is detailed and follows national strategies well. It is being reviewed in the light of the revised Primary National Strategy.

The curriculum is enhanced by events such as a literacy club, book fairs and World Book Day.

- Media education is covered incidentally and has not been audited.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are good with some excellent features.

- Excellent use of data supports school self-evaluation and is used to group pupils, to set objectives, to track the progress of pupils and to target teaching and learning.
- The subject leader knows well the strengths in English and what needs to improve. The subject action plan is a detailed and useful management tool. An excellent management strategy is the evaluation of each of the language modes. The evaluations are comprehensive and pick out all the areas for development.
- Senior leaders work closely together to develop English. Team work is strong.

Provision for poetry

The provision for poetry is good.

- Pupils and teachers enjoy poetry, but mainly humorous, quirky poems not reflective ones. All find difficulty in naming favourite poets or poems.
- There is clear progression in teaching poetry from the reception year to Year 2. Poems are used as part of topics and pupils are encouraged to write their own either as a class or individually.

Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- The school caters well for different groups of children and all make equally good progress.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continue to raise the achievement of boys in writing
- develop the Steps to Success, learning objectives and marking for writing by including all aspects of the writing process.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term and made available to the team for the next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Tweddell
Additional Inspector