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28 March 2007

Mr Fogg
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Fogg

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 27 March 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 five lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in English are good.

- Pupils achieve well from starting points on entry which are broadly average. 2006 results in the end of Key Stage 2 tests rose to well above average.
- Assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006 showed standards to be average – a decline from those in previous years. Pupils, particularly boys, did less well in writing.
- Current standards are above average because pupils learn to recognize and use different techniques for varying purposes in their writing.

- Pupils develop into confident, mature and interested learners. However, the neatness of written work is variable and many pupils speak too quietly in class discussion, limiting the value of what they have to say.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Lessons are very thoroughly planned with good attention to the individual needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are fully involved, both in supporting learning and assessing pupils' progress.
- Whilst marking is regular and assessment systems are good, too much marking does not give exact guidance to pupils about how to improve.
- Teachers make stimulating use of interactive whiteboards and computers, teaching pupils alternative means of presentation as well as important life skills.
- Class discussion is brisk and interesting but quieter pupils are not always successfully drawn into it by teachers' questions.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- Curriculum planning ensures that pupils are provided with a good range of activities and approaches. A wide range of written genres is studied.
- Teachers make good links between subjects so that pupils extend their literacy skills in areas such as history, geography, and religious education.
- Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 would benefit from more guidance in their reading choices.
- In response to a criticism in the previous report, teachers plan and use drama and speaking and listening activities well.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are good.

- Work in English is highly organised. Administrative paperwork is thorough yet accessible.
- Detailed analysis of data, coupled with careful checking of lessons, and pupils' books, give a clear view of what works best and where change is needed.

- Good leadership and clear communication by the coordinator result in all teachers understanding their role in developing pupils' English skills.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- Pupils are enthusiastic about poetry, even younger ones being keen and able to explain what they like, and to repeat favourite lines they have learned.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of different poetry forms and poems from other cultures.
- Whilst they are skilled at spotting techniques and using them in their own work, some pupils are clumsy in the way they use rhyme and imagery.
- Both teachers and pupils see poetry as an integral part of English.

Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Very good relationships mean that all pupils feel valued and confident to work in groups.
- Underachievement is quickly spotted and strategies to tackle it are put in place and checked.
- Differentiation for both higher and lower attainers is carefully and thoughtfully planned. Classroom assistants work very effectively alongside teachers.
- The gap between boys' and girls' achievement has widened in Key Stage 1.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving writing standards by the end of Key Stage 1
- making sure that all pupils regularly get precise guidance about how to do better with written work
- using questioning strategies which will ensure that all pupils benefit from class discussion.

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

Jon Lövgreen
Additional Inspector