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Mrs Jean Shepherd  
Headteacher  
St John's Church of England Primary School  
Worrall Road  
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Dear Mrs Shepherd

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 21 January 2008 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: independent learning 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 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 outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English are above average and achievement is outstanding.

- Children enter the school with standards that are slightly below national expectations. They make excellent progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave Year 2, they reach standards which are above average in reading and writing. This good progress is then built on in Key Stage 2. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007, standards were exceptionally high in English and the progress made by the pupils was outstanding.
- Pupils make excellent progress in speaking and listening and standards are high.
- English makes an outstanding contribution to the pupils' personal development and well-being. Their attitudes and behaviour are

excellent. There are many opportunities in the curriculum and outside school for them to develop important skills for life to which they respond positively. The school has established good links with parents and the local community which enhance the pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

## Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Lessons are well planned to take account of the different abilities of pupils. Individual lessons are part of a coherent programme which is clearly understood by the children, so that they can link their learning to previous lessons and know how their knowledge and skills will develop in future lessons.
- The pace of lessons is brisk and activities are linked to clear learning objectives.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Behaviour management is positive and firm.
- Good questioning techniques probe and extend the pupils' learning. Teachers encourage pupils to intervene in lessons to seek clarification or to share their perceptions with others.
- Opportunities to reflect on their learning during lessons help pupils to assess their progress.
- Lessons are underpinned by accurate assessment which enables the school to support and extend the learning of individuals. The school sets challenging targets for the pupils and monitors their progress towards them closely. Although marking is regular and clearly states what has been achieved, it does not consistently give precise advice to the pupils on how to improve their work.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is good.

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is sufficiently broad and flexible to match the needs of the pupils
- Activities in English are well planned so that they provide a good context for learning.
- The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of trips, such as to Bristol Zoo to extend the pupils' knowledge of Kipling's 'The Jungle Book', and visits to the school by story tellers and writers. The school also identifies and uses the particular skills and interests of parents in the English curriculum.
- The curriculum provides ample opportunities to develop the pupils' creativity and they are enthusiastic about the range of reading, writing, the use of drama in English and opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) for writing and research.

- The school has started the process of identifying areas for improving and assessing literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

## Leadership and management of English

The quality of the leadership and management of English is outstanding.

- Excellent leadership ensures that staff are confident in their abilities while always striving to improve.
- Rigorous and regular monitoring of standards and achievement lead to an accurate evaluation of provision which is the foundation for good strategic planning.
- The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of English, which is matched by a collaborative approach to planning and assessment across the school.
- The school has ambitious targets for achievement in English, progress towards which is carefully monitored.
- Resources are well managed and training for teachers in English is carefully matched to the school's requirements.

## Independent learning in English

Independent learning in English is good.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their reading and appreciate the opportunities that they are given to choose and discuss books.
- They are encouraged to participate in speaking and listening activities and respond well to the opportunities that this gives them to develop and express their own opinions.
- They speak highly of their use of ICT saying that it helps them to make choices about styles and formats and to develop their ability to conduct their own research.
- Assessment procedures in lessons encourage the pupils to reflect on their learning effectively.

## Inclusion

Inclusion in English is outstanding.

- The school monitors the progress of pupils carefully and regularly, making sure that support is tailored well to individual needs. Consequently pupils of all abilities make very good progress in their learning.
- The school intervenes at an early stage when necessary and tailors intervention to match the needs of individuals carefully. It monitors the effectiveness of intervention well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide excellent support for classes, groups and individuals.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that marking consistently provides precise information and advice to pupils about how to improve their work.

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

Andrew Harrett  
Her Majesty's Inspector