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Mrs M Pye
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Dear Mrs Pye

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 March to look at work in English. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils who gave up part of their lunch hour to meet me.

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 five lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be satisfactory but improving.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English are above average and achievement is satisfactory.

- Standards show improvement. At Key Stage 1, standards are on target to be above average in reading and writing as they were in 2007. Standards are on target to be above average at the end of Year 6 and indicate improvement on 2007 results particularly in the percentage of pupils on target to attain Level 5
- There has been good progress since the last inspection in the key issue of developing consistency in pupils' writing in other subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in Reception and infant classes and satisfactory progress in the junior section. Year 6 pupils have made good progress since the beginning of the year.

- Pupils enjoy English and display good attitudes to the subject in lessons. English makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning of English is satisfactory and improving.

- There has been good improvement in teaching of English since the last inspection. Whilst there is currently inconsistency in quality of teaching across classes, there is also significant expertise to help embed good practice. There is much good learning, particularly with younger and the oldest pupils, and consequently these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' progress is underpinned by the high quality of the relationships that teachers have with pupils, which means that pupils want to do well. In one or two classes observed, less effective class management led to satisfactory rather than good progress. Where learning is good, teaching fosters pupils' independence effectively and gives emphasis to pupils' talk in all forms to develop the quality of pupils' thinking. In addition, in one or two classrooms, displays promulgate a rich vocabulary.
- All teachers are very clear what the lesson is about and share this effectively with pupils. Pupils are also clear about how they will know that they have been successful in the lesson. Work is planned carefully to meet the range of needs. Generally, there was good teamwork with teaching assistants who provided effective support to individuals but who were able to spread their influence to others.
- Marking was up-to-date and included a mixture of positive comment and indications of how to improve. Year 6 pupils found the discussion around their targets particularly helpful but this is not yet a consistent feature across the school.

Quality of curriculum

The curriculum in English is satisfactory and improving.

- The curriculum supports independence and inclusion well. The school is developing the flexibility of the new curriculum including links between subjects to provide more meaningful contexts for English work.
- The curriculum provides good enrichment opportunities for pupils to progress and develop their English work for example through the book club, the residential trip and chance to work in a TV studio, and the school production.
- The school uses a good range of poetry, plays and texts. It makes good use of local controversial issues as a context for English e.g. the work on the Wind Farm and Quarry. The library is currently being developed.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management of English are good.

- The quality of leadership is good. You have taken a number of initiatives, which have led to improved standards in English.
- There is excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done. The detailed tracking of pupils along with periodic pupil review with staff has led to sharper, more focused interventions and support for pupils and greater staff awareness of their role in developing the year-on year progress of pupils.

Independent learning in English

Independent learning in English is good.

- Overall, independence is fostered well. There is good encouragement to develop independent reading. Year 6 pupils could talk about their favourite authors, reflecting the significant impact of the book club.
- Homework provides good opportunities for independent research and fosters independent writing skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a school strength and there are good formal and informal opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their skills. The school makes good use of local and national competitions to provide contexts for work, for example the filmmaking and the poetry publication. Drama and hot-seating are used effectively.
- Year 6 pupils are given good opportunities to debate a meaningful local issue and demonstrate maturity, initiative and independent thinking.

Inclusion

Inclusion in English is good.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities (LDD) make good progress against their targets because of the quality of provision.
- Intervention and support are carefully targeted and monitored. There is tight tracking of pupils' progress to pick up underachievement quickly.
- The school's international links with a school in Gambia and the links with a Northampton school broaden pupils' international and cultural awareness.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing consistently good learning by embedding the good teaching practice seen in some classes across the school;
- extending effective target setting so that pupils know specifically how to improve their work; and
- improving opportunities for effective speaking and listening.

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

Roderick Passant
Additional Inspector