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Ms S Cousins
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Cousins

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 November 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 included a focus on our current survey theme of creativity 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 two lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement is outstanding. Standards are well above average.

- Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Some pupils have high attainment. All groups of pupils achieve equally well and consistently reach very high standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in Communication, Language and Literacy. At Key Stage 1, attainment is consistently well above average at Levels 2 and 3. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 remain consistently well above average at Levels 4 and 5.
- Standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils are confident, articulate and fluent speakers and express themselves well. They listen critically and reflectively to others and value their views.

- English makes an outstanding contribution to the personal development, self-esteem and self-confidence of pupils. Their opinions are taken very seriously and they are given many opportunities to make these known, such as through pair and groupwork, the school council, assemblies, circle time and class debates.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and energetic and enthusiastic teaching inspires high levels of motivation from pupils.
- Sessions are carefully planned and differentiated, including by pupils themselves, and objectives and outcomes are clear. Pupils' learning needs are known very well and skilfully matched to purposeful, stimulating and challenging tasks that take good account of learning styles. Information and communication technology supports learning well.
- Expectations are high, skills are carefully and thoroughly taught and good quality resources are used very well. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils promote independent attitudes to learning very well.
- Pupils behave very well. They enjoy English, relish the challenges offered to them, work very hard, apply what they have been taught effectively and are proud of their achievements.
- Assessment of learning, that includes pupils, informs planning very well. Pupils are set challenging targets, their progress is tracked very carefully and underachievement results in prompt intervention.
- Careful, thorough and supportive marking, with some that is excellent, helps pupils to improve and regular moderation ensures consistency in teacher assessment.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The English curriculum is structured for breadth and balance very well and subject to regular review and evaluation to secure progression. Excellent use is made of the local community and local facilities to secure relevance, interest and enjoyment.
- Cross-curricular links are excellent.
- Cultural awareness is developed well and a good range of enrichment activities, such as from visiting drama groups, engages pupils very well.
- Very good use of the renewed framework for literacy has further strengthened provision for speaking and listening.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Effective leadership drives continuous improvement, ensures consistently good provision and secures very high standards.
- Priorities, policies and procedures are very clear, planning for improvement is meticulous, performance data are analysed very well and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation are comprehensive and robust.
- Outstanding provision for the continuing professional development of teaching and support staff has earned the school an Investors in People award in recognition of this commitment. Alongside excellent teamwork, the expertise of non-teaching staff enables them to make an outstanding contribution to learning.
- Expectations for all pupils to achieve well are very high and inclusion is secured very successfully. Well delivered interventions and careful tracking of progress show good gains in learning for targeted pupils.

Creativity in English

Creativity and originality permeate the English curriculum very strongly. Provision includes explicit planning for creativity in all aspects of English, including homework; good opportunities for critical reflection, collaboration and choice; good provision for drama and good use of creative practitioners.

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

Rosemary Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector