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Mrs L Thomas Burns  
Headteacher  
Longwood Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Thomas Burns

Ofsted 2010–11 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 16 June 2010 to look at work 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four part-lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is good.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is good.

- In 2009, national test results for Year 6 pupils improved and were broadly average overall and above average for those reaching Level 5. Results at the end of Year 2 also improved, especially in writing.
- Pupils made good progress from their low starting points, especially boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's monitoring of pupils' performance this year indicates that most continue to make more than expected progress, although results for Year 6 are not likely to match last year because there are more pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In the lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory, and mostly good, progress. They settle to work quickly and concentrate well on a range of activities. They enjoy working together in pairs and small groups

and cooperate well. When given the opportunity, they show initiative and are keen to review their own progress. They take pride in the quality of their work and want to share it with others.

### Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is good.

- Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and match work carefully to the differing needs and capabilities of pupils, particularly in starter activities.
- They have good subject knowledge and, in the best teaching, constantly reinforce subject terms throughout the lesson to give pupils confidence and provide them with a language for learning.
- Teachers use a good range of activities, including productive paired talk, to develop pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants provide very effective support to individuals and regularly lead small groups to guide them in the lesson's main task.
- Although, in the most effective lessons, teachers use questions very effectively, occasionally others do not prompt pupils sufficiently to get them to explain or extend their answers.
- Teachers' marking is regular and some is very detailed with excellent guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. However, some marking relies too heavily on general comments.

### Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory and improving.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced with a full range of writing opportunities which are increasingly linked to other subjects. Reading, speaking and listening are also promoted in teachers' planning and through volunteers who listen to children reading regularly. However, there is relatively less study of different media and use of computers in relation to English.
- Long-term plans are detailed and the school has begun to develop the inclusion of events and outings to enhance pupils' experiences and increase their engagement. There are growing opportunities for pupils to see live theatre, receive visitors with special interests or skills and learn through writing for real purposes and audiences; for example, the newspaper project based on the recent school day trip to the seaside.
- Teachers have worked hard to provide attractive and stimulating classroom displays which reinforce key subject terms and support learning. There is some effective use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' interest, for example in using film clips to stimulate ideas for writing.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are good.

- The subject leaders have a clear vision for English and set high expectations based on careful analysis of pupils' progress and monitoring of their work. They work well together and are building a successful team approach across the school.
- Regular monitoring of teaching and marking and reviews of pupils' progress have enabled development areas to be identified. There is a detailed action plan with well-chosen priorities. Strategies to raise the profile of writing have been effective in raising achievement.
- The subject leaders provide effective models of good practice, for example in the quality of marking and constant reinforcement of subject knowledge. They are aware of the need to share these skills across the school and to provide opportunities for teachers to see very effective practice in other schools.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the consistency of teaching and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
  - use questions carefully to encourage pupils to extend and explain their answers more fully
  - use their comments and the targets they set in marking work to help pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve
- further developing the curriculum by:
  - extending opportunities for pupils to apply literacy skills in other subjects, providing real purposes and audiences
  - ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to understand and use computers and communication technology to extend their experience of different forms of media.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg  
Her Majesty's Inspector