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Mrs L Bolton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bolton

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 25 February 2013 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; a learning walk and observation of seven lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communication and language slightly below those expected for their age. Because of outstanding teaching, they make better than expected progress and almost all meet or exceed expected levels by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1.
- This strong start is built upon in Key Stage 1 and pupils consistently attain above the national average in reading and writing, with attainment in reading slightly higher than in writing. This is reflected in the outcomes of last year's phonics screening (linking letters with the sounds that they make), which was above average, although boys did not do as well as girls. Since then, the school has taken effective action to help boys catch up. During the current academic year, the rate of progress in reading and writing has accelerated further and pupils throughout Key Stage 1 are on track to attain even better outcomes than in previous years.

- Attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently above the national average, with reading being a particular strength. In the most recent Year 6 national tests, almost all pupils attained or exceeded the expected levels and the percentage making expected progress was better than other schools locally and nationally. Since September, achievement in reading and writing has improved still further and inspection evidence confirms the school's predictions that pupils' progress and attainment in reading and writing is likely to be significantly above expected levels by the end of the year. This very positive picture is reflected throughout the key stage, with progress in Year 5 being particularly impressive. Throughout the school, standards of handwriting, speaking and listening are very high. Although pupils' written work is well-presented, too much is written in pencil, rather than in pen.
- Groups of pupils - such as those with special educational needs, those who qualify for additional government funding ('Pupil Premium') and those who speak English as an additional language - make outstanding progress in reading and writing. This is because the school provides effective early interventions, carefully matched to the individual needs of such pupils.

Teaching in English is outstanding.

- Inspection evidence confirms the school's own rigorous monitoring of teaching, which is of a very high standard in English and underpins pupils' outstanding progress. Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent subject knowledge, especially in phonics and early reading. Lessons are exceptionally well-structured and planned to take account of previous learning and pupils' different abilities. During lessons, highly effective use is made of on-going assessment techniques, such as questioning, which enables teachers to respond rapidly to pupils' emerging needs and to adjust their teaching accordingly. The use of a range of strategies, such as in linking speaking and listening to writing, is having a very positive impact on raising pupils' achievement in writing, especially that of boys.
- Highly imaginative teaching motivates pupils extremely well and ensures a brisk pace in lessons. Teachers plan writing activities that are exciting and purposeful, such as in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were enthusiastically planning tourist information about a range of exotic holiday destinations to present to younger pupils. Teachers consistently model high standards and have high expectations of pupils. Their passion is inspiring pupils' enthusiasm for English, so behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Marking is of a consistently high standard because detailed and evaluative comments provide clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.

The curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The outstanding curriculum is innovative, imaginatively planned and kept under constant review. It very successfully meets the learning needs of all the pupils in reading, writing, speaking and listening. As a result, pupils are articulate and confident readers and writers. There is an exceptionally rich and varied programme which fires pupils' enthusiasm and ensures that high standards of achievement are maintained. However, the school

recognises the need to further embed pupils' understanding of grammatical terminology and the technical aspects of grammar, especially in the older classes. There is a clear focus on developing literacy skills in all other subjects and strong links to areas such as drama are particularly effective. For example, the recent Year 5 production of 'Goldilocks' by Roald Dahl has significantly accelerated pupils' progress and confidence in all aspects of English.

- Programmes in phonics and early reading have been particularly successful. Independent reading, writing, speaking and listening are extremely well promoted and systematically developed. A wide range of suitable texts links well to topics so that pupils develop a love of poetry and literature. This rich curriculum is further enhanced by trips, visits and activities. Children's writers visit the school regularly.

Leadership and management of English are outstanding.

- The cohesive and passionate leadership team has been highly successful in maintaining and further improving already high standards in teaching and pupils' achievement. They have made excellent use of accurate assessment and monitoring of data to drive improvement and share good practice. The excellent quality and provision of professional development for all staff is well-matched to their needs. Leaders are exceptionally well informed about local and national developments. As a result they are at the cutting edge of local and national initiatives.
- Improvement planning is exemplary. It uses a wide range of data to identify what needs to improve and the actions that will be taken to achieve this. A particular strength is the clarity of the criteria against which the success of such actions is to be measured.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- embedding plans to improve older pupils' understanding of grammatical terminology and the technical aspects of English grammar
- strengthening the presentation of pupils' written work, especially in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that pens are used more consistently.

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

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector