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Miss Barringer
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Dear Ms Barringer

Ofsted survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 June 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: provision for poetry. 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 and some part lessons. The overall effectiveness of English was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

In English, achievement is outstanding and standards are high.

- Achievement was outstanding in 2006. School data shows that the starting point in communication, language and literacy for your pupils is typically below the local average. They reach standards which are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and consistently well above average by the end of Key Stage 2, as reflected in national tests.
- Pupils make exceptionally good progress in speaking and listening. They express their ideas clearly and thoughtfully and they listen to

each other with unusual consideration. Their writing shows very clear understanding of purpose and how this affects writers' choices.

- Your pupils show an excellent approach to learning in English. They reflected seriously on their work in the lessons observed. They understand how to reach their targets and they take increasing responsibility for their learning as they mature. They take good care with spelling and handwriting.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Outstanding features of teaching and assessment were seen widely in lessons, books and progress tracking.
- Learning is very well managed and monitored. Teachers' planning is based on detailed assessment of progress and sets out clearly the steps to move pupils forward. Monitoring of progress is sharp and plans are adapted.
- Teachers explain their high expectations very clearly so every pupil understands how to do their work well. They successfully involve pupils in evaluating their work against simply expressed success criteria.
- Teachers use a good variety of activities and resources to make learning interesting and to engage all pupils. Speaking and listening play an important part: for example, in a Year 4 lesson, several brief interludes to dramatise and discuss key questions prepared pupils very well to write a play script.
- Thanks to careful joint planning, teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils to get the most out of activities.

Quality of curriculum

The English curriculum is outstanding because it is well matched to the wide range of needs among the pupils.

- The full range of the national curriculum for English is provided, including the study of different kinds of text including the moving image and the use of information and communication technology for drafting writing. Themes and resources are up to date and reflect pupils' interests and stage of development.
- Work is linked well to other areas of the curriculum, giving pupils opportunities to research or write on topics they are studying. Pupils like the fact that English work has a clear purpose and builds on what

they know. Good writing has often resulted from their visits or cross curricular projects.

- The pupils' enjoyment of English has been increased by good opportunities to be involved in activities like drama and film making, and by the improved selection of books.
- Interventions are finely tuned to needs: for example, brief daily spelling lessons are taught in groups formed according to level of ability.

Leadership and management of English

Leadership and management in English are outstanding.

- The school's leadership team and the literacy coordinator have been highly effective in raising achievement and standards and empowering staff.
- The senior leadership and coordinator for the subject share a good understanding of standards, achievement and provision. They have fully involved staff in moving forward as a team, drawing on each others' strengths, with a clear sense of direction.
- Strategies have been thoughtfully selected and developed to fit the school. Data and observation are used extremely well to monitor progress towards challenging targets and evaluate and adjust approaches.

Provision for poetry

Provision for poetry is good.

- Though poetry has not been a top priority in the drive to raise achievement, it is a regular and well taught feature.
- Pupils enjoy poetry and talk with enthusiasm about a reasonably wide range of poems and activities with poetry. There is scope to increase the challenge and variety of poetry they encounter. The teachers help them to understand poems through engaging approaches such as dramatic recital and visualising. They guide pupils in writing poetry as a group and individually, giving feedback as they go, and encouraging both originality and skill.
- As with their other writing, pupils share in devising and using very clear success criteria. These help them to evaluate and develop their own poems.

Inclusion

Inclusion is an outstanding feature.

- Vulnerable pupils participate well in lessons because teachers plan effectively for their needs and make very good use of skilled support. Interventions are carefully tailored to clearly identified needs.
- Expectations for progress are high and progress tracking shows that the very great majority achieve or exceed them.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that pupils encounter a progressively more challenging variety of poetry.

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

Susan Bowles
Her Majesty's Inspector