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Mrs C Cowlard
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cowlard

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 15 February 2011 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 lessons and the lunchtime writing club.

The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is outstanding.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently well above average over recent years. Exceptionally high standards in reading and speaking and listening are evident throughout Key Stage 2, and although standards in writing have been slightly lower in the past, inspection evidence confirms that a range of recently introduced strategies, such as one-to-one support, is having a very positive impact on raising standards. As a result, pupils' progress, already exceptionally high in reading, is now showing a significant improvement in all aspects of writing, except handwriting where standards are variable. Since the start of the year, almost all pupils have made the expected progress, and many have exceeded this, some by a considerable margin.

- In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is exceptionally high with consistently well above average outcomes in national tests at the end of Year 2. In writing, attainment has been average and the school has put in place successful strategies to raise the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels. Inspection evidence confirms that this is having a positive impact and standards in writing are improving accordingly.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in communications, language and literacy that are at or below those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress, especially in reading, phonics, speaking and listening. For example, in 2009/10 all pupils achieved and many exceeded the expected levels in these areas by the time they transferred to Key Stage 1.
- There are no underperforming groups and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and sometimes exceptional, progress. This is because their needs are identified early on and highly personalised and effective support is provided.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is outstanding.

- The teaching observed was never less than good and much was outstanding. This is because teachers plan their lessons extremely well to meet the wide-ranging ages and abilities of the pupils. They make excellent use of monitoring and assessment data to ensure that teaching matches individual needs. They provide inspirational ideas to motivate and inspire pupils, such as in one lesson where pupils 'interviewed' Sir Edmund Hillary on his ascent of Mount Everest to enable them to complete the 'missing pages' of his diary.
- Teachers have high expectations and, because pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy both reading and writing, they are very keen to aspire to the high standard of work that is expected of them.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The pace of lessons is brisk and carefully differentiated questioning is used very well to assess pupils' understanding, reinforce learning and challenge them to improve at a faster rate. Pupils are confident in their responses and, throughout the school, their speaking and listening skills are a strength.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, especially with regard to the teaching of phonics. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide consistently good support to both teaching and pupils' learning. Classroom resources are very well used to support and reinforce new learning. In some instances, teachers do not model joined handwriting, and standards in pupils' handwriting vary as a result.
- Pupils' work is accurately marked with detailed and helpful guidance. Strategies such as the use of target booklets and writing assessments provide pupils with a clear indication of their strengths and the areas that

they need to develop. As a result, pupils' targets are clear and they know what they need to do to improve their work.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is outstanding.

- The curriculum is extremely well planned to ensure that it is broad, balanced and meets the needs and interests of all the pupils. In English, the school has successfully balanced the need for a creative curriculum which links clearly to other subjects and one which has a strong emphasis on the progression of skills, for example in phonics.
- Information and communication technology is used very well to support both teaching and learning. Enrichment activities such as the writers club, the 'Roald Dahl Day' and the work on evacuees are having a very positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm for literature and their interest in writing.
- A strength is the way in which pupils' needs and interests are met as a result of a personalised approach to curriculum provision in English. For example, exceptionally good intervention programmes are put in place for pupils who are identified as needing extra support, and links with such institutions as Exeter University are helping more able pupils to become even more successful writers.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

Leadership and management in English are outstanding.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have a very clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in English. This is because they systematically monitor teaching and pupils' learning and progress. Strategic planning has a clear focus on raising attainment further and makes very good use of a range of evidence to identify suitable priorities for improvement. Staff are very well trained and their enthusiasm is palpable. Targets are challenging but achievable and there is a very clear commitment to further improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of handwriting by ensuring a consistent approach in teaching and modelling a joined style.

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 published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector