

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



12 October 2010

Mr J Vasey
Headteacher
Stanhope Primary School
Gresford Street
South Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE33 4SZ

Dear Mr Vasey

Ofsted 2010–2011 survey inspection programme: assessing pupils' progress (APP)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 4 October 2010 to evaluate the impact of the APP initiative.

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: scrutiny of documentation; observations of teaching and learning; and discussions with senior leaders, other staff and pupils, and the school improvement partner.

The overall use of assessment to support learning is good.

The APP initiative

Impact on pupils' achievement and attainment

- APP has contributed to improvements in pupils' achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, new learners of English and vulnerable groups, achieve well. Attainment is average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This indicates that pupils are making good progress from their generally well below average starting points. Currently, a third of pupils exceed expected levels in English and mathematics, a sizeable increase compared with last year.

Impact on the quality of pupils' learning and progress

- APP plays an important part in accelerating the rate of pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing. Pupils make good progress because

teachers tailor the work carefully to meet their individual needs. The mix of gaining new knowledge, applying what they learn and saying when they are unsure, helps pupils build successfully on what they understand and use new skills confidently. Pupils show considerable resilience when tackling challenging activities.

- The use of APP criteria has helped to extend pupils' choice of learning activities in literacy. In mathematics, however, choices are more limited. Most pupils are less independent in selecting their own challenges and applying learning in different contexts. Gifted and talented mathematicians flourish because they follow a personalised learning programme which extends the scope and range of their skills.

Impact on the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning

- The APP initiative is raising teachers' expectations. They use APP criteria as reference for daily observations of pupils' learning. This helps them to plan lessons that incorporate the right level of challenge for individuals and groups of pupils. Interventions and extra support are used flexibly to secure pupils' progress.
- APP has contributed to strengths in marking. Pupils and teachers use the same system when marking work. Time to respond to assessment is part of the learning process in lessons. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Impact on the curriculum

- APP has supported the school's development of a creative curriculum because the criteria give teachers a clear view of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and the confidence to plan learning experiences that meet their individual needs.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- extending pupils' involvement and independence in mathematics lessons by giving them a choice of learning activities and opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other curriculum areas.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop assessment practice in support of school improvement.

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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Clark
Additional Inspector