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01 November 2010

Mrs Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Ofsted 2010–11 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 15 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; discussions with senior leaders, other staff and pupils; and a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.

The overall use of assessment to support learning is good.

Impact on pupils' achievement and attainment

- Increased accuracy in teachers' assessment and a clearer understanding of progression are making a positive contribution to raising attainment.
- The development of suitable short-term targets that focus on pupils' next small steps in learning is contributing to maintaining the pace of learning.

Impact on the quality of pupils' learning and progress

- APP is helping staff to devise and communicate clear success criteria and identify key questions to test pupils' understanding.
- Pupils have increasingly good opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work.

- The use of APP criteria for assessment and the effective monitoring of pupils' progress are enabling teachers to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' learning. Successful interventions are carried out at individual pupil and whole-school level.
- APP is helping to focus support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented. Tasks and activities are being closely tailored to the needs of these different groups.

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

- Accurate assessment ensures that teachers have a secure baseline from which future progress can be measured.
- Teachers' planning usefully identifies opportunities for assessment.
- Marking in pupils' books and oral feedback in lessons provide helpful comments that relate to pupils' individual targets.
- Pupils and teachers share an understanding of National Curriculum levels and they are developing a common vocabulary with which to discuss assessment.

Impact on the curriculum

- The curriculum is under review with the intention of matching it more closely to pupils' needs and interests while providing a good range of assessment opportunities.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- providing parents with better information about their children's individual targets and so enabling them to play a greater role in supporting learning
- enabling pupils to take greater ownership of their targets and identifying how the work they are doing contributes to meeting their targets.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector