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Mr Marshall  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Marshall

**Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: assessing pupils' progress (APP)**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 15 September 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 students, and a representative from the local authority.

The overall use of assessment to support learning is good.

**Impact on students' achievement and attainment**

- The increased accuracy and frequency of teachers' assessment in English coupled with their enhanced understanding of progression are contributing to raising students' attainment and achievement.
- Students' engagement with APP monitoring sheets, in English and for pilot groups in other subjects, through peer- and self-assessment has developed their understanding of the next steps in learning which is boosting their progress.

**Impact on the quality of students' learning and progress**

- The school has very effective systems for monitoring students' progress across the curriculum. The use of APP criteria, particularly in English,

highlights gaps in students' learning and ensures interventions are tailored closely to their needs.

- Students have good opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work against APP criteria in English. In this context, APP is helping to clarify success criteria for students and develop their understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. This is less developed across the curriculum.
- APP is advancing students' acquisition of knowledge and understanding by helping to sequence learning appropriately.
- APP is used well to diagnose the strengths and areas for improvement for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

- Where APP is embedded, assessment practice is focused sharply on students' progress. Increased consistency has been facilitated by teachers sharing and moderating students' work.
- APP has strengthened the link between assessment and planning. Where practice is most effective, teachers target learning activities precisely to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. They are also clear about when to move students to the next step in learning.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies. However, APP is leading to precise written comments on assessed pieces of work and evidence confirms that students respond well to this clearer guidance.
- Dialogue between teachers, fostered by APP, has been highly beneficial in enhancing understanding of the National Curriculum and stimulating debate about the best methods of teaching and learning.

### **Impact on the curriculum**

- APP has led to schemes of work being re-written in English to facilitate better sequencing of learning and assessment.
- APP criteria are supporting a review of approaches to teaching mathematics and science.

### **Areas for development, which we discussed, include:**

- sharing good practice in marking to reduce the variation in the quality of teachers' written feedback to students
- embedding opportunities across the curriculum for students to be fully informed about the next steps in their learning.

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

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

**Peter Gale**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**