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Dear Dr Davies

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Primary Schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visits on 13 October 2011 and 9 February 2012 to look at your work in transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

The visits 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 responses from parents in Year 1 to a questionnaire; interviews with Year 1 parents and carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents; observation of four lessons and provision in the Reception class.

Overall, the transition from Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is good.

Key findings

- The strong foundations for learning that pupils gain in the Reception class are built on well as they move into Year 1. As a result, they make good progress and typically attain standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Good opportunities for pupils to get to know their teacher and become familiar with the routines of their new class before they leave the Reception class helps pupils to settle quickly into Year 1.

- Effective communication between staff and careful planning of support ensure that the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met well as they move into Year 1, so they make equally good progress in their learning and development as their peers.
- Parents and carers are generally positive about the transition arrangements and most feel that their children are settled, happy and enjoying school. However, a few noted that they would like more information about the routines and expectations of learning and progress in Year 1 so that they are better equipped to support their children.
- Teaching in Year 1 is consistently good and is underpinned by a deep understanding of how pupils develop and learn best. Skilful, reflective practitioners, including teaching assistants, constantly monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and adjust lessons to carefully meet pupils' different needs. As a result, time is used well and all pupils make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Well-established Early Years Foundation Stage practices such as role play, outdoor learning and opportunities for pupils to make choices continue throughout Year 1. As a result, pupils understand what is expected, demonstrate good levels of independence, are confident and collaborate with each other readily.
- The themed curriculum in Year 1 is well organised, imaginative and meaningful. It excites pupils' curiosity and provides a wide range of practical opportunities for them to develop their interests and use their reading, writing, communication and social skills. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement, high levels of enjoyment and positive attitudes to learning.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology to enrich learning experiences and interest pupils. For example, the use of cameras to film adverts as part of a literacy lesson made a strong contribution to developing pupils' communication skills and their enjoyment.
- Regular assessments of pupils' learning are accurate. The monitoring of their progress from Reception through Year 1 is systematic and robust. Detailed analysis is used effectively to plan their next steps towards appropriately challenging targets. Termly evaluations identify how much progress pupils have made since the previous assessment but do not include an evaluation of the progress made since the start of the year.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing parents and carers with more information about the routines and expectations of learning in Year 1 so that they are better able to support their children through the transition from the Reception class
- including information on termly evaluations about the progress that pupils have made from the start of the year as well as from the previous assessment to ensure clarity about their progress over time.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop transition at your school.

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

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector