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Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gould

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 the visit of Alison Storey HMI on 13 September 2011 and my visit on 21 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: interviews with Year 1 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of four lessons and of provision in Year 1 for outdoor learning.

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

Key findings

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children achieve well because their interests are captured through the learning opportunities offered. When children start school their skills are below those expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, as a result of the secure start, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations and this represents good progress.
- Good communication between staff leads to the sharing of information about pupils' progress. Year 1 teachers initially adopt the same approach

to assessing pupils' progress as used in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This leads to a smooth transition of planning learning experiences which are finely matched to the needs of individuals, including those who speak English as an additional language and the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As pupils develop, assessments are refined in line with National Curriculum levels. Pupils not making expected progress are quickly identified and interventions put in place.

- Throughout the year, and more especially in the summer term, children in Reception have effective opportunities to become familiar with Year 1 expectations. For example, whole-school topics, which begin with 'Stunning Starts', lead to pupils' use of resources from both age groups, such as the outdoor areas for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1. Reception children are quickly introduced to Key Stage 1 assemblies where work from topics is celebrated and shared.
- Children have opportunities to get to know the routines of their new class before they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's skills of independence are built on in Year 1. Year 1 teaching assistants observe Reception children during free play and group time. Consequently, they support those who need more help in developing independence and understanding routines, such as pupils whose first language is not English.
- The themed curriculum is a key strength throughout the school. The work in the Reception year, which starts with learning from the child's own interests, underpins the transition approach to learning in Year 1 and further up the school. For example, Year 1 pupils are inquisitive to find out about topics such as the Great Wall of China. Teachers in Year 1 capitalise on opportunities to teach literacy and numeracy through topic work which leads to pupils' good levels of engagement in lessons, such as their enthusiasm for writing letters to the Emperor of China.
- Parents and carers are positive about the transition arrangements. Curriculum plans are sent home each term in the Reception and this continues in Year 1. Parents and carers have the opportunity to visit Year 1 classes in the summer term before their children start in Key Stage 1. However, some said that they would like more information before the end of the Reception year and the school has plans in place to address this.
- The good teaching in Year 1 results from teachers' clear expectations of what pupils should achieve by the time they move to Year 2. Adult-led group work and independent work in Year 1 build effectively on the approaches to teaching in the Reception year. Targets set extend pupils' prior learning and help them to improve their work, for example in writing. A recently introduced whole-school approach to writing starts in Reception and includes individual targets. Early indications are that the levels attained by pupils in writing in Year 1 are beginning to improve.
- Leaders and managers demonstrate a good understanding of the significant role played by the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 teachers in building strong foundations for future learning. They ensure

that their work reflects the needs of young children well, such as adapting whole-school curriculum approaches to learning in a way that captures youngsters' interests.

- Regular assessments of pupils' learning are developing. The monitoring of progress from Reception through Year 1 now includes a greater focus on the progress of different groups, including those who may be vulnerable or at risk of falling behind. The school recognises that this is in early stages and not enough time has passed to make comparisons of different groups.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- consolidating the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of different groups so that interventions and planning can be further refined and/or amended to meet the needs of individuals
- continuing to develop the involvement of parents and carers in their children's transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 by providing more information before the end of the summer term

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

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector