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Mrs S Tanner
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Dear Mrs Tanner

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 12 September 2011 and 28 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; observation of five lessons and meeting with a group of higher achieving Year 1 pupils to talk about their work.

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

Key findings

- When children start school their skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as a result of the secure start. Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1 through to the end of Year 2. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are improving, especially in writing, and this represents good progress.
- Children attend a number of different pre-school settings. The school takes careful consideration of the assessments they receive from the

settings in the 'celebrate my learning' folders, which include comments from parents and carers. Information is recorded appropriately against the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. The school builds on this information through visiting families at home. Observations of children's skills are made when they start school in the autumn term. This range of assessments forms the basis of planning activities and setting expectations for the levels individual children should reach by the end of the Reception Year and on into Year 1.

- A particular strength in transition has been the school's approach to writing. The Reception children display confident attitudes towards using their early writing skills as a result of high expectations from staff. For example, children attempt to write and spell signs, such as, 'Intruders not allowed', for the house of *The Three Little Pigs*. As a result, school monitoring and work in books shows that pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1.
- Parents and carers are positive about the transition arrangements. They praise the work of the school in developing their children's writing and appreciate the opportunity to experience writing in school with their children, in the 'Stay and Write' sessions. Parents and carers report that these sessions give them a better understanding of the expectations in Year 1.
- Senior leaders with teachers in Year 1 have a clear understanding of what pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, should achieve by the time they move to Year 2. This is well supported through ongoing assessments and monitoring pupils' progress. Consequently, any gaps in pupils' progress are quickly identified and interventions put in place. Targets set are constantly reviewed and amended to provide pupils' with further challenge.
- The good teaching in Year 1 arises from teachers' planning and assessment which matches activities to the different needs of the pupils. Information from the Early Years Foundation Stage profile informs Year 1 teachers initially as to groupings for literacy and numeracy. As a result, in the teaching of phonics, for example, work in groups is clearly differentiated to extend the higher ability pupils while supporting those less confident in applying their knowledge of the sounds letters make. Well-trained support staff make a valuable contribution in developing pupils' learning in these lessons.
- The effective curriculum, carefully thought out to match to the interests of pupils, is a key to the school's success in writing. Skills for literacy and numeracy are taught through topics, many of which are based in the local area, such as looking at the new shopping centre. In this way, subjects taught arise from the pupils' interests and are particularly successful in motivating boys to write enthusiastically and confidently. This approach begins in the Reception year and so by the time the pupils start in Year 1 they are familiar with the expectations. The school is aware that some

individuals are less confident in reading and mathematics and has plans in place to address this.

- Good communication between staff leads to the sharing of information about pupils' progress. Year 1 teachers report finding the Reception teachers' breakdown of children's abilities, under each area of learning, helpful in knowing pupils' progress across all curriculum areas. The school wishes to develop this further by developing more data discussions between the Early Years Foundation Stage staff and receiving Year 1 staff, after the pupils have spent a few weeks in Key Stage 1.
- 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 are committed to working with parents and carers to support and extend pupils' learning. The school recognises that this is an important area on which to build and has plans in place to help parents and carers support their children further.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- in the autumn term, further developing data discussions between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 staff relating to pupils' ongoing progress
- building on the involvement of parents and carers in supporting their children's skills in literacy and numeracy skills, by providing the Reception children with suggestions for activities during the summer holiday period which will help to prepare them further for Year 1.

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