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13 March 2012

Mr G Prince
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Prince

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 our visits on 11 October 2011 and on 29 February and 1 March 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 and carers in Year 1 to a questionnaire; interviews with Year 1 pupils, parents and carers; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents and observation of five lessons.

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

Key findings

- From their strong foundation in Reception, pupils make good progress in their learning and development as they move through Year 1 to attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 2. Attainment in writing has improved, but is not as high as in mathematics and reading.
- Opportunities to prepare children in Reception for their move to Year 1 are carefully planned and start early in the summer term so that they know what to expect, are very familiar with their new environment and know the adults that they will be with well by the time they move to Year 1. As a result, they settle quickly and their learning journey continues smoothly.

- Parents and carers are positive about the transition. Those who spoke to inspectors feel that they and their children are well informed and prepared for the next key stage effectively. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and enthusiastic about school.
- The prominence of good quality practical outdoor experiences in Reception and Year 1 makes a strong contribution to developing pupils' personal, social and communication skills.
- Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers and assistants. They enjoy lively lessons which are planned in detail for pupils' different abilities. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to work together and share their ideas which contribute to their good speaking and listening skills. Tasks are varied and enthuse pupils but the management of these tasks sometimes detracts from a consistently sharp focus on the intended learning. When this happens, opportunities are missed to correct misconceptions quickly and the pace slows.
- Robust, systematic assessments and detailed monitoring of the progress that pupils make ensure that the needs of pupils are understood well as they move from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1. Interventions and support are planned carefully, particularly for pupils with a disability or special educational needs. The impact of interventions is carefully monitored to ensure that they are making a difference. Consequently, all pupils are fully included and make equally good progress.
- The broad, enriched curriculum is well planned to provide varied, practical learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Similarities in routines and provision such as role-play areas, the use of puppets to describe the intended learning and the stimulating outdoor learning environment dovetails the curriculum towards the end of Reception and the first half of Year 1 effectively. It builds on pupils' skills progressively and continues to motivate and engage all groups of pupils well.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) builds pupils' early reading skills systematically from Reception so pupils become confident, competent readers as they move through Year 1. Cross-curricular topics make meaningful links between subjects which provides pupils in Year 1 with useful opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in other subjects.
- Reflective, knowledgeable leaders and practitioners understand how pupils learn best. They share their high and explicit expectations and so pupils, parents and carers and staff work together to secure good learning and ensure that pupils continue to achieve well as they move from Reception and through Year 1.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that there is a consistent focus on how well pupils are learning throughout practical lessons so that misconceptions are identified quickly and a brisk pace maintained.

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