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Mrs B Cunningham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Cunningham

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 11 October 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: responses from parents and carers in Year 1 to a questionnaire; interviews with Year 1 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents and pupils' work; observation of four lessons.

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

Key findings

- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They move into Year 1 with skills which are, for the most part, above age-related expectations, especially in their personal and social development. They are ready to learn and most take the transition into the immediately more formal approach in Year 1 in their stride, although some are nervous as they change classes. The school has rightly decided to offer children currently in the Reception class more opportunities to meet the Year 1 teachers and visit the classrooms as they begin their transition later this year. The school's very welcoming and supportive atmosphere, well-

focused work on pupils' well-being and supportive Christian environment all help children as they make the transition.

- Parents and carers are pleased with the arrangements for the transition. They find staff very approachable and say that their children are happy and well settled. Some parents would like some further information about their children's progress at the time of transition.
- In the lessons observed in Year 1, pupils worked very well together. They concentrated for extended periods of time and were interested and motivated by the subject matter. The curriculum, including a well-organised unit of work on the Seychelles, is broad, relevant and exciting. Teachers and teaching assistants engage pupils well and manage lessons efficiently.
- However, the tasks set in lessons in core subjects are too often insufficiently challenging. The school's accurate assessments of pupils from both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are not used precisely enough to set well-targeted work which helps the pupils, at whatever attainment level, to take their next steps in learning quickly. Although pupils work hard, some of the activities are too easy for them. The school's assessments show that pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 1. In writing, some pupils with lower attainment make too little progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that although they do plenty of writing, some mistakes and areas needing improvement, for example letter formation or use of vocabulary, are improving only gradually.
- The school teaches phonics (linking letters and sounds) regularly throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, using different resources decided upon by the class teachers and year teams. Pupils enjoy these lessons. However, assessments show that pupils' attainment in phonics, while it is acceptable, is not always as good as it is in other areas.
- Senior and middle leaders are reflective practitioners, who work closely together. Teachers in Year 1 are keen to develop their practice further still and to continue to learn about the particular requirements of this year group. Their work improved and developed between the two inspection visits. The school is well placed to improve further where needed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- sharpening the use of assessment information made on each pupil from the Early Years Foundation Stage as the pupils move into Year 1 so that expectations of pupils are higher and the tasks set for pupils in Year 1 challenge them better in reading, writing and mathematics; ensure that pupils' targets for the end of Years 1 and 2 are always suitably demanding
- considering how effectively the current arrangements and curriculum for phonics teaching are working and whether a more consistent approach across the year groups is necessary.

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

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector