

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



20 March 2012

Mrs C McMahon
Headteacher
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School
2 Oakleigh Park South
Whetstone
London
N20 9JU

Dear Mrs McMahon

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 3 October 2011 and on 6 and 7 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 firm foundation in Reception, pupils make good progress as they move through Year 1 and consistently attain standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. The school's tracking information shows that pupils make least rapid progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- The strong religious ethos of the school helps nurture the pupils' well-developed personal and social skills. Consequently, they have good attitudes and dispositions to learning so are ready for the transition to the National Curriculum by the time they enter Year 1.

- Parents and carers are positive about the smooth transition that their children make from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1. They are clear that the school's arrangements to familiarise the children with their new classes and teachers contributes to their confidence and continued enjoyment of school. However, parents and carers feel less well informed about how they can support their children's learning through the change to the Year 1 curriculum, particularly in relation to mathematics.
- Year 1 classrooms in the autumn term are made similar to those in Reception including having areas for role play, sand, water, writing and construction areas. This makes a positive contribution to pupils settling quickly because changes to more teacher-directed learning are made gradually.
- A systematic approach to teaching early reading dovetails well from Reception to Year 1 so pupils develop their skills progressively. Any gaps in their knowledge are identified quickly and addressed effectively so all groups achieve equally well.
- Opportunities for pupils to make choices are extended from Reception to Year 1 through a daily carousel of practical activities covering different areas of learning. More formal, teacher-directed learning occurs through the autumn term and by the beginning of the second term, the carousel is replaced with 'Golden Time' choices on one afternoon a week. As 'Golden Time' is used throughout the rest of the school, this contributes positively to the smooth transition for pupils in Year 1.
- Discrete literacy and numeracy lessons and a cross-curricular, topic-based approach to teaching other subjects successfully introduce pupils to the National Curriculum in Year 1. As a result, they continue to make good gains in their learning and development as they move to the next stage of their education.
- Detailed tracking of the progress that pupils make has been introduced so that the needs of pupils are understood increasingly well. Interventions are put in place quickly so ensure that any gaps in learning are addressed effectively and those who are most able are identified.
- Joint planning provides the pupils in different Year 1 classes with equal opportunities to enjoy similar, interesting experiences in lessons. Varied tasks are systematically planned to match pupils' different abilities. However, a good pace of learning is not maintained in all lessons.
- Experienced subject leaders have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop their early literacy and numeracy skills. As a result they are well equipped to support the continued good achievement as pupils move from the Reception to Year 1.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- providing parents and carers with further information about how they can support their children's learning through Year 1, particularly in mathematics
- ensuring that lessons maintain a good pace, consistently challenge pupils to make good progress and provide them with opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills further.

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