

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 Winters
Headteacher
Hearsall Primary School
Kington Road
Coventry
CV5 6LR

Dear Mrs Winters

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 in October 2011 and 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 the parents and carers of Year 1 pupils to a questionnaire and in discussion with the inspector; discussions with pupils in Year 1 and with their teachers; and discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception. The inspector looked at documents such as those relating to pupils' attainment and progress and policies regarding the transition arrangements between Reception and Year 1. The inspector observed four lessons in Year 1.

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

Key findings

- All groups of pupils make good progress across the transition. Children enter the Nursery and the Reception with skills and levels of development below those typical for three- and four-year olds. Because of good teaching, an excellent curriculum and very well-managed transition, most pupils by the spring term are above or at the level expected for their age

in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant proportion of pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.

- The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is impressive in the way it uses and responds to children's interests. Monthly 'wow' sheets enable parents and carers to identify areas of interest. Teachers ensure that in the following month, the interests of every child are used to influence what is taught. Planning in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 is strongly based on children's needs and prior attainment.
- The curriculum in Year 1 is excellent. At the start of the year, it is strongly based on play activities, but groupings for guided reading, letters and sounds, and mathematics continue from Reception into Year 1. Lessons are planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum but also elements of the Reception curriculum which children have yet to become proficient in. A strength of transition is the way the curriculum and teaching changes over the year; the amount of group working, independent working and writing increases. Reception pupils in the summer begin to have similar lessons as Year 1 and use classes and rooms throughout the school. As a result, strong continuity exists in the curriculum and good pupil progress is made.
- A very effective feature of transition is the moving up of a teacher and/or teaching assistant from Reception into Year 1. In addition, Year 1 teachers complete some team-teaching of lessons with Reception staff so that they have an in-depth knowledge of pupils' attainment and their needs.
- Effective systems are in place to transfer information, for example an academic meeting to discuss data, learning journals and the groupings of pupils. Books which have been started in Reception, such as a writing book and one to record children's art work, are passed up and continued in Year 1. A meeting takes place to discuss each pupil's pastoral needs, personal information and any outside agency involvement. The combination of these meetings, the team-teaching and the 'rolling up' of staff means that staff have a very secure knowledge of pupils as they enter Year 1.
- Teaching in Year 1 is good. In one physical education lesson, there was a very high level of pupil activity, self-evaluation and opportunities to improve. There was also a high level of questioning to individuals and to groups to ensure that they think, explain, evaluate and improve their performance. In an English lesson, pupils learnt a new concept, that of a timeline. Through drama and excellent teaching, by the end of the lesson pupils were able to write very well about the great fire of London using a timeline. Learning time in lessons is maximised to extend and consolidate learning. During register time for example, Year 1 pupils answered the register in Spanish. In a reading group, the teachers questioned pupils well to extend their knowledge of letters and sounds and the meaning behind the text. Teaching in the shared area, where pupils from both classes mix and learn through play-based activities, is less strong. Some of the play activities are not as challenging as they could be to extend pupils' skills and knowledge.

- Parents and carers felt that the transition was well managed and smooth. They said that the new system of staff moving up to teach Year 1 has enabled pupils to settle quicker and be less upset by the change. They were impressed with the continuation of the play-based curriculum continuing at the same time as pupils gradually moving towards more formal working.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensure that play-based activities, particularly those in the shared area, enable all pupils to extend their knowledge and skills.

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

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector