

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



22 March 2012

Mrs L C Easton
Headteacher
Clover Hill Community Primary School
Glenhurst Drive
Whickham
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE16 5SJ

Dear Mrs Easton

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 6 October 2011 and 8 and 9 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 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents; observation of five lessons in Year 1 over the two visits and scrutiny of pupils' work.

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

Key findings

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for children of their age, but with weaker skills in writing and linking sounds and letters. They make good progress in the Reception Year and this is maintained across Year 1. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because their needs are identified early and they receive effective support.
- The quality of teaching in Year 1 is good. Teaching is lively and conducted at a brisk pace with clear timescales given for the completion of tasks.

Good attention is paid to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussions in pairs and drama activities. Work is planned carefully to meet the individual needs of pupils. Pupils are involved in assessing how well they have done for themselves through 'Sally success criteria'. However, on occasions, pupils do not listen carefully enough to the instructions they are given and do not know what to do when they go to do their task. In addition, some pupils do not work as well in independent tasks as they are able and therefore do not make as much progress as they could.

- The curriculum is interesting and stimulating for pupils with a clear focus on developing key skills, often through a thematic approach. There is a systematic programme of teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and these sessions are carefully planned by the Reception and Year 1 teachers to ensure progression and continuity in learning the sounds. This does much to accelerate pupils' progress in reading.
- The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. For example on entry to Year 1, teachers identified a group of boys who found it difficult to engage in role play. Staff created a designated role-play area outdoors and more opportunities and equipment were provided for these pupils. As a result, their physical development, creative skills and speaking and listening skills improved well. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which Year 1 pupils can participate in, including Irish dancing, football, karate, keyboard club, drama, art, singing, science workshops and family Spanish lessons.
- Class groups established towards the end of the Reception Year are continued into Year 1 so that pupils are working with peers that they know well. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is a strength of the school and is woven through every aspect of the school's work. Detailed records on pupils' personal and social development are continued in Year 1 and pupils are assessed on the key skills that they have developed. In Year 1, there are discrete PSHCE lessons often based on the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme, in addition to daily circle times when pupils meet to discuss their own and others' feelings.
- Pupils behave well and are very aware of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They know they can seek help from their friends or adults in school if they have a worry or concern. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as eco-councillors and health and safety officers and say they feel very 'grown up' now they are in Year 1.
- You have a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and are rigorous in monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make to ensure that any underachievement is quickly addressed. You have high expectations of pupils and staff. Other senior leaders, including the English, mathematics and PSHCE subject leaders have a good understanding of the developments in the Early Years Foundation Stage and of the transition process into Year 1. This is

because they are closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make in a range of ways. Staff work very effectively as a whole school team to ensure that transition is smooth for all pupils, but particularly from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1.

- Parents and carers have positive views of the transition process and feel that their children are well prepared. They appreciate home visits being conducted before their child's entry to school and find staff are helpful and approachable if they have any concerns.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that there is a consistent focus throughout each lesson on how well pupils are engaging in their learning to make sure that they all achieve as well as they can.

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

Christine Inkster
Her Majesty's Inspector