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Mrs Higton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Higton

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 5 October 2011 and 14 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: the responses from parents and carers of Year 1 pupils to a questionnaire; interviews with Year 1 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and with teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents such as policies and data regarding the attainment and progress of pupils; and observation of four lessons.

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

Key findings

- The transition is well led and managed. Leaders at all levels in the school understand the importance of Year 1 and have introduced successful strategies to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress. Year 1 staff have a good understanding of both Reception and Key Stage 1. This means that they have a good understanding of what pupils have already learnt and where they need to progress to. A teaching assistant is deployed in Reception and in Year 1 to provide continuity of staffing.

- Appropriate systems are in place to transfer information, assessments and work from Reception into Year 1. Children in Reception have opportunities to join Year 1 for events, after-school activities and at play and lunchtimes. As a result, they settle well into Year 1 and quickly gain in confidence because they are accustomed to the facilities and school procedures. Learning journals are transferred and continued in Year 1, and resources and equipment used at the end of Reception are transferred into Year 1. However, Year 1 teachers have only a few opportunities to teach their Year 1 pupils while they are still in Reception, so a little time is lost at the start of Year 1 while they get to know the pupils.
- At the beginning of Year 1, teachers work well to harmonise their teaching and the curriculum so that it is similar to the summer term of Reception. This means that pupils continue their play-based and practical-based working and the transition is smooth.
- One of the key reasons why the transition is good is because teaching in Year 1 enables all groups of pupils to make good progress, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils who have been identified as disabled and those having special educational needs also make good progress in reading and writing.
- The teaching of early reading and writing is a strength. Teachers take the groups which have already been formed in Reception and provide tailor-made, exciting activities and tasks that consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. As a result, pupils attain levels that are approximately half a year ahead of those typical for children of this age.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They are motivated and enthused because the teachers use resources, such as the interactive whiteboard and practical resources, to stimulate pupils and make learning fun. They engage purposefully in strategies such as talking partners, where pupils contribute their answers and thinking to others in the class. This means that throughout the lessons they are active and making progress in their understanding.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- accelerating pupils' progress at the start of Year 1 by enabling teachers to have first-hand experience of teaching pupils while they are still in Reception
- implementing plans to extend all pupils' personal, social and emotional development more progressively into Year 1.

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