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Mrs C Spruce
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Spruce

Ofsted survey programme – evaluation of the Primary National Strategy

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during the visit Linda Killman HMI and I made on 04 October 2006, to evaluate the impact of the Primary National Strategy (PNS).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the Primary National Strategy, the visit had a particular focus on mathematics and transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and from Key Stages 1 to 2.

The visit 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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the Primary National Strategy in your school was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- After a blip in 2005 when standards in English fell at Year 2 and for girls in mathematics at Year 6, standards recovered in 2006.

Comparisons with other schools nationally are not yet available but standards are likely to be broadly average.

- Despite the fall in standards in 2005, the trend over the last four years is for gradually improving standards in mathematics.
- Children achieve satisfactorily. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are broadly in line with expectations and children make satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall.

- Strengths of teaching observed included good use of daily assessments of children's progress. The composition of the teaching groups is determined by what children learned the previous day. This enables teachers to give additional support to children who need it and allows children with good understanding to move on quickly.
- A weakness observed was when work was pitched at too high a level for children to cope with, without taking into sufficient account the children's level of understanding.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school has reviewed the curriculum in line with *Excellence and Enjoyment*. It has developed a curriculum based on the key skills that children should acquire, guided by the National Curriculum. The content of the curriculum has been reduced. Teachers have the flexibility to spend more time on a subject that interests children or where they need more time for consolidation, or change the content as new opportunities arise.
- Good links between subjects enable children to practice their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. The link with geography is of very good quality.

Leadership and management of the Primary National Strategy

Leadership and management of the strategy are satisfactory, overall.

- You provide strong leadership for the school. You have a detailed knowledge of the school's performance. You reacted promptly to the fall in standards in the national tests of 2005 and took action to improve them.

- Subject leadership is satisfactory, with a range of monitoring activities to keep mathematics under review.
- The school has only recently been able to access local authority support for the numeracy part of the Strategy. It receives far less support for mathematics than is provided for schools generally.

Focus: transition

The management of transition is satisfactory, overall.

- The transition from Key Stages 1 to 2 is smooth. Year 3 children have moved from infant to junior departments without disruption to their learning and enjoyment of school.
- The transition to from Reception to Key Stage 1 is less successful, involving the children in too great a change in the way they are taught and in the difficulty of their work.
- Good use of data on children's levels of knowledge and understanding enables children to be placed in classes with children of similar ability and aptitudes, where work can be more easily matched to their needs.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is satisfactory, with some good features.

- The strength of provision for children with learning difficulties noted in the last inspection has been maintained, despite a temporary change in key staff. The school provides good support for the few children who enter school with little or no English.
- The school directs its resources well to meet children's individual needs and to keep parents fully informed.
- The school's emphasis has been firmly on improving aspects of literacy for children with learning difficulties but the same attention has not been given to improving their work in numeracy. The school has made little use of intervention strategies for children falling behind in mathematics.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- improve the transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1
- improve teaching where work is not appropriately matched to children's levels of understanding
- provide more support for children who fall behind with their mathematics

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to implement the Primary National Strategy.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector