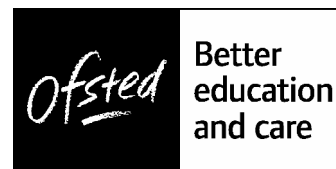


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10 November 2006

Mrs D George
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs George

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Evaluation of the impact of the Primary National Strategy

I am grateful for the hospitality and co-operation of you and your staff during my visit on 7 November 2006 to look at work in the Primary National Strategy (PNS).

As outlined in the initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the PNS, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of the strategy in mathematics as well as transition.

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 relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observations of mathematics lessons in Years 3 and 4.

The overall effectiveness of the PNS was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

The impact of the strategy in raising standards and achievement is satisfactory.

- Standards are broadly in line with the national average and pupils are making satisfactory progress in mathematics.

- Progress made by the more able pupils, although satisfactory, is not as good as it could be.
- The informed use of ICT is helping to raise standards particularly for the lower attaining pupils.
- The strategy has had a good impact on improving pupils' attitudes to learning as well as their personal development and well-being.

Quality of teaching and learning of subjects

The impact of the strategy at improving the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- The schools' use of the strategy is contributing effectively to improving teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics.
- Lesson objectives are clear and teachers' questions help pupils to develop their thinking and problem solving skills.
- There is insufficient explicit teaching of key vocabulary and pupils do not use key words sufficiently well.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas and insufficient challenge for the most able.
- Pupils are not encouraged to articulate their understanding or contribute sufficiently to the assessment of their learning.
- The quality of teachers' assessments is very variable; although marking is closely related to learning objectives there is insufficient written guidance for pupils about what they can do to improve further.

Quality of curriculum

The effectiveness of the curriculum in raising achievement and improving teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- The school is developing a creative curriculum. A review of planning has led to improved progression and the content of lessons is more meaningful and purposeful.
- The school makes good use of the National Numeracy Strategy's medium term planning.
- There are missed opportunities of reinforcing basic skills including speaking and listening as well as reading and writing across the curriculum.
- The school has yet to produce a matrix to identify cross-curricular links.

Leadership and management of the Primary National Strategy

The leadership and management of the strategy are satisfactory. Mathematics is well led and the impact of subject leadership as well as the use of strategy in raising achievement is satisfactory.

- The PNS has provided a clear direction for whole school improvement.

- The school's involvement with the Primary Leadership Programme helped the school with its review of management structures.
- There is now more shared leadership and management which include middle managers.
- Leaders and managers undertake lesson observations and scrutiny of work. However, these activities are not always focused sharply on standards and progress.
- Action and improvement planning, although informed by evaluations, are not explicitly linked to outcomes for learners and make limited use of quantifiable success criteria.

The quality of transition

The arrangements for the transfer of pupils between the different phases of their education are good overall.

- There are good links with the infant and secondary schools; however, transition initiatives are stronger between Key Stages 2 and 3 than they are between Key Stages 1 and 2.

Inclusion

The effectiveness of the strategy in promoting inclusion is good.

- Different teaching strategies and the use of ICT are leading to good levels of inclusion for pupils who were at risk of exclusion or who were previously underachieving.
- The strategy has helped the school to increase teachers' repertoire of strategies as well as improve their knowledge of English and mathematics and this has led to improved levels of inclusion within lessons.
- The strategy has helped the school to improve the way it manages those pupils who previously presented very challenging behaviour.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure there are consistently good levels of challenge for the more able pupils
- ensure lessons reinforce basic skills, include good explicit teaching of key vocabulary as well as more opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas and encourage pupils to be more involved in the assessment of their learning
- develop marking so that it includes helpful comments on how pupils can further improve their work
- develop a curriculum overview which identifies natural links between subjects
- ensure that monitoring and lesson observations include a sharper focus and judgments about progress and standards

- ensure that improvement and action plans include quantifiable success criteria about the intended outcomes for learners
- develop strategies to further improve the transition of pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the SNS in the school.

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

G Gordelier
Her Majesty's Inspector