

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



28 September 2006

Mrs E S Cotton
Headteacher
Mendell Primary School
Allport Lane
Bromborough
Wirral
CH62 7HN

Dear Mrs Cotton

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 18 September 2006 to look at work in the Primary National Strategy (PNS).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the PNS, the visit had a particular focus on the quality of continuity and progression for pupils on entry to a new key stage.

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 observation of two literacy lessons in Years 1 and 3/4.

The overall effectiveness and impact of the PNS was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good.

- When children join the nursery their skills and knowledge vary considerably but are, on average, well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and Reception classes reaching standards that are below average by the time they begin Year

1. Results in the Key Stage 2 national tests indicate that pupils make good progress as they go through the school to reach standards that are broadly in line with national averages by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in writing are below those in reading. Girls outperform boys in English.
 - Pupils in Years 3/4 were able to identify vocabulary in a text which built up the reader's understanding of a character. They could write a simple description of a fairy story character, distinguishing between appearance and character traits.
 - Standards of spelling are not high enough.
 - Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and collaborate effectively with one another.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Activities were well matched to learning objectives and pupils' learning needs.
- Resources were well chosen to stimulate pupils' interest.
- Teachers used final sections of lessons effectively to evaluate pupils' progress. Carefully focused questions helped them determine the next steps in learning.
- Teaching assistants supported pupils well throughout lessons.
- One lesson observed was not divided into short enough sections so that pupils were asked to listen to the teacher for too long.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school is developing a more integrated approach to developing and applying skills so that pupils have opportunities to practise what they have learned in a variety of subjects and contexts.
- The successful introduction of a programme to promote pupils' social and emotional intelligence has increased opportunities for speaking and listening and helped pupils develop a better understanding of the consequences of their actions.
- Opportunities for performing and visual arts are enhanced, both within and beyond the school day, by courses and clubs provided by the local secondary school which has specialist status in these areas.

Leadership and management of the Primary National Strategy (PNS)

The leadership and management of the strategy are good.

- Effective monitoring and evaluation enables the school to evaluate new initiatives carefully and tailor them appropriately to meet pupils' learning needs.
- Good use has been made of materials from the *Intensifying Support Programme* to develop an efficient and effective system for tracking pupils' progress. The use of curriculum targets across the school is being established.
- Professional development is well matched to needs identified through an analysis of assessment information. Training provided through a partnership with the local secondary school has raised teachers' awareness of learning styles. Effective use is being made of a learning network to bring about improvements in mathematics and there are sound plans for focusing this year's participation in the *Primary Leadership Programme*.

The quality of transition

The management of transition is good.

- A bridging project for Year 6 pupils is run in conjunction with the local secondary school and other partner primary schools. It provides a variety of opportunities for prospective Year 7 pupils to work together on sporting, arts, and performance activities as well as meeting socially.
- Year 3 children say they are enjoying the challenge of hard work now they are junior pupils.
- During the summer term the school allocated considerable time for the Year 1 teacher to observe and work with children in the Reception class. Provision, activities and routines familiar to the children have been adopted and are proving successful in smoothing the transfer to a new class and Key Stage.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- The school makes very good use of a wide range of assessment information to evaluate pupils' needs, identify suitable intervention programmes and measure their effectiveness.
- Very good multi agency links enable the school to access the support best matched to pupils' needs.
- The school has been highly effective in using external specialists to train teaching assistants so extending the school's own capacity to meet pupils' needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- * to raise standards in spelling
- * to improve the performance of boys
- * to close the gap between pupils' performance in reading and writing.

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

Mrs Jane Austin
Her Majesty's Inspector