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Mrs S Cikulski  
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Dear Mrs Cikulski

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Evaluation of the Primary and Secondary National Strategies

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Mary Ryan HMI, on 02 May 2007 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 impact of Assessment for Learning (AfL).

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 three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. The impact of AfL on pupils' achievement and personal development is inadequate.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen to learn, listen and respond well and are supportive of each other.

- Lesson observations indicate pupil progress is just satisfactory. This is in the main due to the setting arrangements in place in Years 3 to 6. However, there is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
- The school has made a start on the analysis and use of data. The use of this analysis to inform lesson planning is at a very early stage.
- There are no systems in place to track the progress of individual pupils with learning difficulties or to measure small steps of progress.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory. The impact of AfL on teaching and learning is inadequate.

- Behaviour in all lessons observed was very good.
- Planning consists of unit plans, referenced to the national framework. However, learning outcomes are not always sufficiently precise to meet the needs of all pupils. The units do not provide sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The best teaching was exemplified by good questioning which encouraged pupils to explain their thinking for example, on converting percentages to fractions and an open-ended and challenging activity which motivated the most able.
- Weaker aspects of teaching included limited questioning to support pupils in explaining their thinking and reflecting on strategies used to arrive at answers; insufficient differentiation within the classes set according to ability; and too few targeted activities for individuals and groups. The quality of marking was cursory with limited guidance to pupils on targets and what they needed to do to achieve these.

### Quality of curriculum

The mathematics curriculum is satisfactory. The impact of AfL on the curriculum is inadequate.

- Some aspects of creativity are in place for example, the development in some classes of links between mathematics and science.
- The recently introduced interactive whiteboards in some classrooms are beginning to be used to enhance teaching. However, the pupils who are withdrawn for additional small group support for English and mathematics do not have access to this resource.
- Pupils say they enjoy mathematics. They enjoy the games, practical activities and group work. However, they indicate that this does not take place in all classes and the school acknowledges that practice is not always consistent.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management in mathematics are satisfactory. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of AfL is inadequate.

- The senior staff team is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, the pace to improve the development of teaching and learning in order to raise standards has been too slow.
- The subject leader for mathematics is relatively new in post and has attended training provided by the local authority. A planned audit and evaluation of mathematics is currently scheduled for summer term 2007. This will involve the monitoring of planning, lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews.
- The school acknowledges that it needs to make the monitoring of classroom practice and the scrutiny of pupils' work more rigorous and evaluative.
- Staffing in the school is stable. However, too few teachers and learning support assistants have the opportunity to observe good practice in other settings.

## Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL overall is inadequate.

- Senior managers have identified AfL as an area for development from September 2007.
- The school has improved its strategies for monitoring and tracking the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Although, the information on pupils' progress is not yet used systematically by teachers in planning their lessons.
- There is insufficient guidance and training for staff on how they can use assessment for learning to enhance their teaching and engage pupils more fully in the learning process.

## Inclusion

The impact of AfL on inclusion is inadequate.

- The introduction of targeted support for those pupils in Year 6 who need more support in mathematics through the Breakfast Club is a good initiative.
- The introduction of setting arrangements for mathematics is reported by the school as a success, although there is no formal evaluation of its impact.
- The school does not have systems to monitor the achievements of those children who make slowest progress in mathematics.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raise standards in mathematics
- ensure lessons provide sufficient challenge for all pupils
- ensure that the leadership of the school implements the areas for improvement with urgency and rigorously monitor and evaluate the developments.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics and assessment for learning 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

Kekshan Salaria  
Her Majesty's Inspector