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Mrs C Wain  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Wain

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 on 21 May 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 nine parts of lessons. There was a particular focus on teaching and learning in mathematics.

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement and personal development are outstanding. AfL has an outstanding impact because teachers know how to motivate and extend the learning of pupils with a wide range of needs.

- Pupils start school with skills well below those typical for their age. They make outstanding progress and, by the time they leave at the

age of 11, standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national average.

- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. At the age of 7, most of them reach standards just below the expected level for their age. Pupils achieve particularly well in their use of language, which lays a strong foundation for their learning in Key Stage 2.
- All groups of pupils, including those starting with very low skills or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), make very good progress.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning, their confidence and their ability to work independently are central to their outstanding achievement.

### Quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

AfL contributes effectively to outstanding teaching and learning.

- Teaching is stimulating, relevant to pupils' experience and is based on high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils enjoy learning and they persevere until they master challenging tasks.
- Pupils make good progress because they are clear about what they are expected to achieve in each lesson. Teachers skilfully adapt these expectations to ensure all ability groups are suitably challenged.
- During lessons, some teachers keep all pupils actively involved by selecting individuals or groups to answer specific questions and adapting the difficulty of the question to suit them.
- Teachers are skilful in continuously assessing pupils' progress during lessons and giving them immediate feedback that helps them to improve.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding and the impact of AfL on it is good.

- The school has made very good use of the PNS guidelines for *Excellence and Enjoyment* to design a broad curriculum that gives pupils many different opportunities to experience success. A strong emphasis on practical activity and educational visits helps pupils to develop their understanding through very good first-hand experience.
- The mathematics curriculum is very good. Practical activities are used well to help lower attaining pupils understand new ideas.
- There is a good method for recording pupils' progress that enables teachers to identify which groups of pupils are above, at or below national expectations for their age. This information is used particularly well to plan additional support for groups of lower attaining pupils and those with LDD.

- Some teachers provide additional care for pupils based on pupils' own assessment of how they are feeling.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding, both in relation to AfL and to pupils' achievement in mathematics.

- Strong leadership drives the high quality of teaching, curriculum and care that brings about outstanding achievement for the pupils.
- The management of assessment systems is less strong, though still good. The school has improved its use of assessment for marking and planning in response to recommendations in its 2005 inspection, but has not yet established consistency in all classes.

## Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL is outstanding.

- AfL is at the heart of the very high quality of teaching in most classes and ensures the pupils' outstanding achievement and personal development.

## Inclusion

- Staff are skilful at identifying and removing barriers to pupils' achievement, whether these barriers are rooted in pupils' learning skills or in their personal well-being. The outstanding curriculum makes a very strong contribution to inclusion, because pupils want to come to school to learn.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- consolidating improvements made to ensure consistency in the use of assessment for marking and planning.

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

John Rutherford  
Her Majesty's Inspector