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07 June 2007

Mr D Miller  
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Dear Mr Miller

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 22 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 four 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. The impact of AfL is outstanding.

- Pupils' standards when they start the school are in line with the national average. They make outstanding progress and their standards, especially in mathematics, are well above the national average when they leave. This has been the case consistently for the last three years.

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. The achievement of many of the pupils who have a low starting point is exceptional.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding and contributes to their outstanding achievement. When they are given targets, they are strongly motivated to achieve them. They reflect on their work and talk confidently about what they do well and what they struggle with. They take full advantage of the opportunity to discuss mathematical problems with partners.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and excellent AfL is central to this.

- Teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Teachers frequently check that learning objectives are met which enables pupils to make very good progress.
- Teachers effectively use assessment information to plan tasks at the correct level of challenge for each ability group.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide very good support for lower attaining pupils. Teachers are very skilful at altering the pitch of their questions to involve pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers' carefully crafted questions; assessment of pupils' answers; and corrections of any misunderstandings underpin the good progress made by pupils.
- Marking in mathematics includes pupils' self assessment, teachers' constructive feedback and an opportunity for pupils to respond to the feedback. However, this effective practice is not yet consistent in all classes.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum is good, as is the impact of AfL on it.

- The mathematics curriculum is very good. All aspects of mathematics are covered; activities are interesting and relate to pupils' everyday experience; and there is a strong emphasis on practical activity to consolidate understanding.
- Teachers' plans and the targets set for pupils are based on good end-of-year records of pupils' standards. However, there is insufficient recording and analysis of pupils' progress during the year.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding in relation to the use of the PNS to raise achievement. Leadership and management of mathematics are outstanding.

- The school has made very effective use of a PNS learning network and the Primary Leadership Programme to improve teaching, learning and achievement, particularly AfL. The involvement of many teachers in this work has contributed to consistent good or better teaching across the school.
- The mathematics co-ordinator accurately identifies strengths and priorities for development. She provides clear guidance for colleagues. Her strong influence is seen in the consistency of very good teaching and pupils' achievement across the school.

### Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL on achievement, pupils' personal development and the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Strong leadership at all levels and the priority given to AfL in staff training provide consistency in very effective practice in all classrooms.

### Inclusion

The impact of AfL on the achievement of all groups of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils of all abilities make very good progress because teaching is skilfully adapted to meet their needs. The support for lower attaining pupils and those with a learning difficulty is effective.
- Records of pupils' progress are not used sufficiently to plan a longer-term strategy for pupils who are underachieving.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the consistency of marking
- improving records of pupils' progress and their use in 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