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Mrs Leadbeater  
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Dear Mrs Leadbeater

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 13 June 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 seven parts of lessons. There was a particular focus on teaching and learning in mathematics.

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

#### Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Standards of attainment in mathematics are below average and have been for three consecutive years. Teachers do not effectively assess pupils and as a consequence cannot sufficiently ensure their progress.

- Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with a wide range of abilities though most have skills below those typical for their age. Pupils make

insufficient progress over time and they leave school with standards which are too low.

- Higher attaining pupils underachieve because teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- The achievement of lower attaining pupils and those with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) is satisfactory because support for them is well planned.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well; they are keen to learn and they work well independently.

### Quality of teaching and learning of mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because teachers do not make effective use of assessment in their planning. The school has made very little progress with recommendations from their previous inspection for improving the use of assessment, therefore the following weaknesses remain:

- Teachers' expectations are too low. They do not have a clear view of how pupils' attainment compares with national expectations for the age group.
- Pupils are not clear about what they are learning. Many lessons do not have clear learning objectives.
- Pupils do not have targets nor do they understand what they have to do to improve their work. Marking does not provide the pupils with information they can use. Pupils are not involved sufficiently in assessing their own learning.
- Pupils are expected to listen for too long in lessons. There is insufficient variation in the pitch of questions to ensure all pupils are challenged.
- Some teachers have started to work on one or two of these weaknesses, but there is no systematic, consistent approach throughout the school.

### Quality of curriculum

The curriculum, overall, is satisfactory. The impact of assessment on curriculum planning is inadequate.

- In response to the previous inspection, pupils' learning is now reinforced by greater use of practical activities.
- In some mathematics lessons, teachers include group activities from other subjects that do not relate to the new work that has been introduced. This is making it difficult for pupils to consolidate their new learning and it slows their progress.
- The school has a clear record of the progress that pupils have made since starting school. This is not analysed sufficiently to set challenging targets and accelerate pupils' progress.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate. There is insufficient focus on raising pupils' achievement. Leadership of improvement in AfL since the previous inspection is inadequate.

- The school's leaders are not giving a clear direction to raising achievement and this can be seen in the unacceptable degree of inconsistency between classes in planning and teaching. This partly arises from leaders trying to accommodate teachers' differing views about the form that improvements should take.
- AfL has had insufficient impact on standards because necessary developments have not been introduced with sufficient urgency. The decision to phase in AfL, starting with aspects of pupils' personal development, is misjudged given the priority that needs to be given to improving achievement.

## Assessment for learning

- Overall, the impact of AfL on achievement is inadequate because the school has not developed a systematic and consistent approach to embedding it in planning, teaching and learning.

## Inclusion

- The school's provision for lower attaining pupils and those with LDD is satisfactory. A useful record of provision shows how the school carefully allocates a range of support programmes to meet their differing needs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising achievement and standards by
  - improving leadership so that there is consistency in the effective use of assessment of pupils' learning,
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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

This visit has raised serious concerns about the school's work. I will report these to the Regional Divisional Manager who will consider what action to take and may arrange an inspection of the whole 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