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Mrs Taylor
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Taylor

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 17 October 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 six parts of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their personal development is good. The impact of AfL on pupils' achievement and personal development is satisfactory.

- Standards in English are above average across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in English.

- Pupils' progress in the lessons observed was at least satisfactory with good progress in classes where AfL was used well.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Most enjoy English and are keen to contribute in class.
- Pupils develop satisfactory skills for independent learning through AfL approaches. They use effective strategies to monitor their progress towards their targets. A few are developing the skills of assessing their own and others' work.

Quality of teaching and learning of English

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

- Teachers are using AfL strategies in all classes but, as yet, with differing levels of effectiveness.
- Detailed planning focuses on the content and structure of the lesson. Learning outcomes, however, are not expressed with sufficient precision to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils know their targets and teachers' feedback gives clear guidance on how they can improve.
- The better lessons observed had good pace, opportunities for collaboration and imaginative cross-curricular links.
- Pupils' progress is slower in lessons where teachers direct questions to a limited number of pupils or when they rely on questions that require only brief responses.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the English curriculum is good. The impact of AfL on the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school promotes literacy skills through imaginative links with other subjects. This contributes significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of the reading and writing.
- Teachers use assessment information satisfactorily to identify groups of pupils that need additional support and to plan work matched to their needs.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory overall. Leadership and management of AfL across the school are also satisfactory.

- Senior leaders identify AfL as central to their plans for raising achievement. They have provided adequate training for staff. The use of targets and partner work demonstrate the satisfactory impact of this

training. However, school documentation does not provide clear guidance on AfL, and its implementation is not yet consistently good.

- The leadership of English is satisfactory. The annual report on the subject provides an accurate account of achievements and areas to be developed. However, it does not clearly analyse the outcomes or evaluate the effectiveness of provision.
- The success criteria in the school's improvement plan lack a clear focus on improving pupils' achievement.
- The monitoring of pupil progress is satisfactory. More frequent collection and analysis of data during the school year ensures that underachievement is identified promptly.

Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL overall is satisfactory.

- The policy on teaching and learning makes little reference to AfL.
- The school has sound systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils.
- Written feedback to pupils is helpful and pupils comment that it helps them understand how to improve their work.

Inclusion

The impact of AfL on inclusion is satisfactory.

- Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make expected progress.
- Lesson plans refer to targeted provision to match the range of needs in a class but too often there is no precise identification of the intended learning outcomes.
- The school reports that the PNS intervention programmes help raise achievement, although there is no formal evaluation of their impact to demonstrate this.
- Support from teaching assistants in classrooms is effective.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving lesson planning by ensuring that learning objectives are precise and clear
- improving teachers' use of questioning strategies to widen participation and encourage pupils to expand and justify their answers.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English 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

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector