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Mrs Gay Hennessy
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hennessy

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 27 September 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 two lessons and other activities.

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

Achievement and standards

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

- The majority of pupils arrive at the school with standards broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress but a high level of pupil mobility affects the end-of-key stage test results.

- Target setting and rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress ensures their good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.

Quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. The impact of AfL on teaching and learning is also good.

- There is a strong culture of collaborative learning. Good opportunities for partner talk help pupils to develop their mathematical ideas and understanding.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan effectively to meet their needs.
- Effective questioning encourages pupils to explain their thinking.
- Success criteria help pupils to evaluate and discuss their own learning.
- Practical tasks and high quality resources engage the pupils' interest.
- Opportunities to make mathematics relevant and meaningful to pupils' lives are sometimes missed.
- Teaching assistants provide high quality support. They keep pupils focussed, support them through good questioning and provide feedback to class teachers on how individuals have progressed in the lesson.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good. The impact of AfL on the curriculum is good.

- Pupils enjoy mathematics, in particular, the games, practical activities and well planned investigations which challenge their thinking and understanding of mathematics.
- The progress of all groups is carefully monitored. Teaching assistants' support is programmed carefully and used effectively to overcome barriers to learning.
- The school has recently introduced personalised learning for mathematics. Pupils are set according to their ability; they have the opportunity to work at their national curriculum level regardless of age. Informal evaluation by the senior team indicates this is already having a positive effect.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in mathematics are good. The effectiveness of leadership and management of AfL is good.

- AfL is central to all improvement plans. Aspects of the strategies have been chosen to support the strategic vision of senior leaders. For example, the focus on how pupils learn and their understanding of success criteria.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensures AfL policy is beginning to be implemented consistently across the school.

- The school's self evaluation procedures are very good. Regular lesson observations provide useful feedback for teachers. As a result, teaching has improved.
- Much work has been undertaken on securing better progression for every pupil. For example, pupils' needs are carefully assessed by the class teacher with the involvement of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator.

Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL overall is good.

- AFL is a key feature of the school's successful drive to raise standards.
- Information gained from rigorous analysis of pupils' assessments informs teachers' lesson plans.
- All school staff are inducted and trained effectively to promote a common approach to AfL.
- The use of individual targets to help pupils understand how to improve their work is underdeveloped.

Inclusion

The impact of AfL on inclusion is outstanding.

- Inclusion is very good because all pupils make good progress and careful monitoring ensures that very effective support is provided for pupils at risk of underachieving.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with individual educational plans by ensuring that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are quickly and systematically addressed.
- Termly reviews of individual educational plans for pupils on the SEN register are carried out with parents and pupils. Data show that this work is having a positive impact.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that pupils have individual targets for mathematics and use them to improve their work
- developing opportunities to make mathematics relate to real life situations and pupils' interests.

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