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Mrs Holland  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Holland

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 January 2008 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 intervention strategies.

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 five lessons and six intervention groups.

The overall effectiveness of the National Strategy was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The impact of intervention strategies on pupils' achievement and personal development is satisfactory.

- Standards in English are broadly average. Pupils who receive additional support through intervention programmes make satisfactory progress.
- The school makes effective use of assessment to track the progress of all pupils and identify those who would benefit from additional support.

- The recently introduced National Strategy material to support the teaching of reading is helping previously underachieving pupils reach the expected levels for their ages.
- Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their intervention groups and feel that they help to improve their reading and writing skills. Relationships are good and pupils want to learn. Pupils work well collaboratively.

### Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The impact of intervention strategies on teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- The teaching of phonics is good and accelerates pupils' progress. These lessons use Primary Strategy materials and have precise learning objectives. Teachers have a good understanding of the recent guidance on the teaching of reading and use assessments to group pupils appropriately.
- Teaching assistants lead many of the intervention groups. They make a sound contribution to pupils' progress overall but a minority reveal weak subject knowledge through their selection of learning activities and unhelpful marking.
- In lessons and intervention sessions aimed at improving writing, the planned learning objectives are too broad. This makes it difficult for teachers and teaching assistants to assess how far the pupils have improved their writing skills.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The impact of intervention strategies in the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school adapts Primary Strategy materials, or uses alternative resources, to give the targeted pupils additional time to improve their literacy skills. Inevitably, pupils receiving these interventions miss parts of lessons on other subjects. The school takes care to ensure that, despite this, pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills in independent writing activities.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management in English are satisfactory. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of intervention strategies is satisfactory.

- The leadership team provides sound direction for raising standards. Following good external support, it now collects and analyses data in line with the principles promoted by the Primary National Strategy.

- There are rigorous systems in place to ensure that teacher assessments in English are secure. These enable the school to target additional support accurately and demonstrate improving outcomes for the targeted pupils.
- The effectiveness of teaching assistants working with intervention groups has not been carefully monitored and evaluated. Consequently, the leadership team is unaware of the professional development needs of staff who deliver many of the intervention strategies.

### Intervention strategies and inclusion

The impact of intervention strategies overall is satisfactory.

- The intervention strategies are helping targeted pupils make progress that is broadly in line with what is expected. Progress is no better than this because the quality of planning and delivering intervention sessions is inconsistent across the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving achievement in writing by planning intervention sessions which have precise learning outcomes and which match the needs of the targeted pupils
- monitoring the intervention sessions led by teaching assistants to establish their training needs and provide them with appropriate professional development.

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