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Mrs Clarke
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clarke

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 23 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 six lessons and two 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 at Key Stages 1 and 2. The use of intervention strategies promoted through the National Strategy, and other strategies chosen by the school, have led to a satisfactory

improvement in the rate of targeted pupils' progress. More pupils are now working at expected levels in reading and writing.

- Pupils with English as an additional language attend intervention sessions and these contribute positively to their good achievement.
- Interventions provided through the National Strategy contribute well to the good attitudes that pupils have towards their work. These attitudes help pupils make satisfactory progress in English.

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- The most successful interventions are those delivered to small groups withdrawn from the class.
- Pupils are very clear about the purpose of the intervention sessions they attend. They enjoy the sessions and are well motivated to become better readers and writers.
- When the intervention for underachieving pupils takes place within whole class English lessons, planning does not identify precisely the group's learning objectives and this limits their progress.
- The school's marking and target setting policy is implemented inconsistently in English. The guidance from the National Strategy has had limited impact in this area.

Quality of curriculum

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

- Pupils withdrawn from class to attend intervention sessions inevitably miss lessons covering other areas of the curriculum. The school takes care to ensure that despite this pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There is effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language through intervention sessions. Trained staff lead these sessions effectively.
- Teachers use resources, including information and communication technology, to engage pupils and accelerate their learning.
- In a minority of classes there is a heavy reliance on worksheets. These do not promote good outcomes in pupils' writing.

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 satisfactory direction for raising standards in English. It has a clear rationale for selecting intervention strategies and staff are trained appropriately.
- The school makes satisfactory use of National Strategy materials to audit the effectiveness of its intervention work and identify areas for improvement.
- There have been limited opportunities for the subject leader to monitor the implementation the English improvement plan. Consequently, there is inconsistency in the implementation of school policies on marking and target setting.
- Progress in English is no better than satisfactory partly because the school has not yet agreed upon a whole school planning policy following their decision not to use the planning tool provided through the National Strategy.

Intervention strategies and inclusion

The impact of intervention strategies overall is satisfactory.

- The school uses a range of intervention strategies in addition to those promoted through the National Strategy. The additional interventions for withdrawal groups, such as the booster groups for writing, accelerate learning more successfully than the support provided for underachieving pupils in class.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the progress and standards of underachieving pupils by ensuring that lesson planning identifies the precise skills and knowledge they will acquire by the end of each lesson or intervention session
- providing additional opportunities for the subject leader to monitor provision and outcomes in English and ensure that marking and target setting policies are consistently implemented.

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