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Mrs Taylor
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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 05 February 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 four lessons and four intervention groups.

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

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in English is good. The impact of intervention strategies on pupils' achievement and personal development is good.

- The majority of pupils make better than expected progress in English. Standards have risen from exceptionally low to broadly average. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading and writing are rising above the national trend.

- Progress is now good because the school tracks rigorously the progress of all pupils and identifies those who would benefit from additional support. It has developed a comprehensive range of interventions, including some from the Primary National Strategy.

Quality of teaching and learning in English

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

- The teaching of English is effective and accelerates progress because the majority of staff have a good knowledge of their pupils' needs. They select appropriate intervention strategies to enable pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning strategies promoted through the Primary National Strategy to assess and improve pupils' understanding. In intervention sessions, they extend learning by asking pupils to explain their views and share their ideas about their reading and writing.
- The effective use of curricular targets and high quality marking supports good learning for pupils of all abilities.
- In a small minority of lessons, progress is slower when planning and teaching focus on the completion of tasks that do not clearly match the pupils' needs.

Quality of curriculum

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

- The school uses a wide range of interventions, including Primary Strategy materials, to give targeted pupils additional time to improve their literacy skills. Pupils who receive additional support in literacy continue to enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum.
- There is an extensive and well-structured intervention plan to ensure that the right intervention is available to meet the particular needs of individuals.
- There are imaginative opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Leadership and management

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

- School leaders provide a very strong direction for raising standards. They have developed rigorous systems for collecting and analysing

data in line with the principles promoted by the Primary National Strategy.

- There is a clear strategy for using interventions to raise standards in English. The effective use of training materials and support from consultants ensures that staff are clear about what they are doing and what they are hoping to achieve.
- Review and evaluation procedures identify best practice and this informs the continuous improvement of the school's intervention strategies.
- There are robust systems in place to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants receive both high quality support and challenge, to secure good progress for all pupils.

Intervention strategies and inclusion

The impact of intervention strategies overall is good.

- The intervention strategies are helping targeted pupils become increasingly effective learners and make better than average progress.
- The accurate identification of potentially underachieving pupils and the careful tailoring of interventions to meet individual needs are improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching and curriculum provision promote equal opportunities well. The strategies implemented by the school successfully overcome the majority of the barriers to learning experienced by pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that all planned activities are well matched to the learning needs of pupils.

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