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Mrs Housden
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Dear Mrs Housden

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 04 March 2008 to look at work in the Primary National Strategy.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the National Strategies, 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 three lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

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

- The majority of pupils arrive at the school with knowledge and skills above those expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards that are well above the national average in mathematics and they make very good progress.

- The school makes good use of strategy resources, for example the springboard materials, and teaching assistants to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy their mathematics. There are keen to learn and respond well to support and praise.

Quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

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

- In lessons, teaching is good with some outstanding aspects. There is good emphasis on oral work, developing pupils' mental strategies and extending their mathematics vocabulary. Teacher's high expectations and high quality exposition helps to ensure all groups make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide good support for targeted pupils.

Quality of curriculum

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

- The school's curriculum is broad and varied. Pupils have many opportunities to experience a wide range of enrichment activities. Teachers plan to ensure all aspects of mathematics are covered and teachers assess pupils' work regularly using the revised National Strategy frameworks.
- Detailed analysis of pupils' weaknesses has informed the planning of the current range of additional support, including focused teaching of key mathematical vocabulary and skills which are well-targeted and coherent.
- Practical tasks, games and investigative inquiry underpin pupils' understanding and enjoyment of mathematics.

Leadership and management

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

- Senior leaders have a good understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses through detailed analysis of assessment information and scrutiny of test papers. This is used effectively in curriculum planning and directing intervention programmes.
- The senior leadership team drive improvements in mathematics by conducting thorough audits of pupils' and teachers' needs, monitoring pupils' progress, sampling pupils' workbooks and evaluating training.
- The school improvement plan is a pertinent and succinct document that drives development in the school.

- Pupils' progress on intervention programmes is carefully monitored. However, although monitoring and analysis is regular, evaluation to assess the impact of the different programmes is not yet formalised.

Intervention strategies

The impact of intervention strategies overall is good.

- Intervention strategies are modified to cater for the needs of individuals and this enables them to make very good progress.
- The combination of individual or small group work for some pupils and targeted intervention in lessons is effective. Lessons and intervention sessions contain a good range of learning activities, with regular opportunities for oral work and practical tasks in which pupils can apply their skills and knowledge.

Inclusion

The impact of intervention strategies on inclusion is good.

- The school is very inclusive. The focus on high achievement for all permeates the schools' policies and practice. All pupils are valued and the responsibility for their progress is shared by all staff.
- Intervention lessons are taught well by teaching assistants who work very closely with the class teacher and demonstrate good and relevant subject knowledge.
- Regular assessment of pupils informs differentiated activities and tasks.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- Improving the evaluation of intervention programmes.

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

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector