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Mr C Hannon
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Dear Mr Hannon

Ofsted survey inspection programme – narrowing the gap in literacy and numeracy

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 07 July 2008 to look at work in literacy and numeracy.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of literacy and numeracy, my visit had a particular focus on how effectively the school is narrowing the gap for pupils at risk of not reaching the expected level of attainment for their age. The visit also evaluated the level of expertise within the school to support pupils with learning English as an additional language.

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 part-lessons and two withdrawal groups.

The overall effectiveness of provision to narrow the gap in literacy and numeracy was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in literacy and numeracy is good. Standards are above average.

- Children enter into the Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those expected for children of a similar age and make good progress in

literacy and numeracy to reach standards that are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

- Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups attain higher standards than similar pupils nationally.
- The two pupils whose first language is not English entered the school able to speak English fluently and have achieved well. However, one of these pupils has made great gains in their social and emotional development due to the care and support given by the school
- More girls than boys attain the higher levels in national tests.
- Pupils behave well, are developing a good level of independence and have very positive attitudes to learning.

Quality of teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy

The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is good.

- Teaching is consistently good in all key stages.
- Tasks set are usually meaningful to the pupils and they enjoy their work.
- Teachers know pupils well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are trained and skilled, and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning both during lessons and when implementing support programmes for individuals and withdrawal groups.
- Pupils are assessed regularly. Those who are underachieving or vulnerable are identified early and a rigorous assessment of their learning needs is carried out.
- Effective tracking of pupils' progress allows teachers and leaders to monitor carefully the progress made by all pupils, especially those who are receiving support.
- Marking and target setting are sometimes used well and provide good guidance for improvement, but this is inconsistent.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for literacy and numeracy is good.

- The variety of intervention programmes, especially in literacy, to support the identified specific needs of underachieving or vulnerable pupils, is a strong feature of the curriculum.
- Opportunities are taken regularly to support those pupils with identified learning needs outside of the normal curriculum, for example before the start of the school day.
- Tasks in lessons are purposeful and relevant to pupils.
- The strong focus on supporting pupils' personal, social and emotional development builds pupils' self-confidence which in turn, has a positive effect on their achievement.
- The school is implementing strategies to reduce the gap between the attainment of boys and girls. However, many of these initiatives are

recently implemented and their impact on achievement and standards is not apparent in the data.

- Cross curricular opportunities to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developing, especially in Key Stage 1.

Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

The leadership and management of provision to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are good.

- Regular and rigorous assessment of progress informs all leaders of underachieving pupils.
- Leaders target provision well to pupils with identified specific learning needs, monitor pupils' progress very carefully and modify the programmes according to the degree of progress made.
- Few opportunities are provided for the coordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy curriculum in all classes.

English as an additional language

There are no pupils who are currently learning English as an additional language.

Inclusion

Inclusion in literacy and numeracy is good.

- All groups of pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy and a high proportion of pupils reach at least the standard expected for their age.
- Pupils identified as requiring special support attain higher standards than similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils who are underachieving receive good support, often through focused intervention programmes, matched carefully to their learning needs.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal and social development provides a firm foundation for learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that target setting and marking in literacy and numeracy are used consistently so that pupils know what they need to do to improve
- extending the opportunities for curriculum leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy curriculum in all classes
- reducing the gap between the attainment of boys and girls in literacy and numeracy.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop literacy and numeracy 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector