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Headteacher
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Dear Mr Thompson

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 10 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 six part-lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Achievement in literacy and numeracy is outstanding. Standards are consistently above average in literacy and high in numeracy.

- Children enter Year 3 with above average skills. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in all year groups.

- Pupils on the school's register of special needs, those from minority ethnic groups and pupils whose first Language is not English attain higher than similar pupils nationally and make outstanding progress.
- There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well 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 outstanding.

- Teaching is consistently strong throughout the school.
- Relationships are caring and supportive and make a significant contribution to pupils' excellent personal development and outstanding academic achievement.
- Work is matched very closely to pupils' needs and pupils find activities enjoyable and interesting. Teachers know pupils well and have high expectations of academic achievement and behaviour.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is carried out regularly and rigorously.
- Marking provides good guidance for improvement.
- Teaching assistants often make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those who have been identified as needing additional help. However, in some lessons they are not deployed effectively and pupils do not benefit as much as they could from this valuable resource.

Quality of the curriculum

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

- The school gives high priority to supporting pupils' social and emotional development. Personal development is excellent and this has a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- Weaknesses in pupils' writing and numeracy skills are identified each half term through the school's rigorous monitoring systems. The curriculum is modified to address the areas for improvement and consequently it is matched exceptionally well to the needs of all pupils.
- Structured intervention programmes are used effectively to support learning of those pupils identified as needing focused support.
- The recent 'Learning Skills' and 'Gateway' initiatives are improving the curriculum by extending learning into pupils' homes and enabling literacy and numeracy skills to be developed across the curriculum. However, these developments are too recently implemented to have a significant impact upon pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

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

- Regular and rigorous assessment of progress enables the coordinators to have a good knowledge of the progress made by all pupils and to target support for those who are not achieving as well as they could.
- All teachers are provided with detailed analyses of the progress made by the pupils in their class and in the year group. The coordinators accurately identify areas for improvement in teaching and curriculum, and establish training and support for staff.
- Through regular and rigorous monitoring of classroom practice and pupils' progress, you ensure that all teachers have a strong degree of accountability for the academic progress of the pupils in their class.

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 outstanding.

- All groups of pupils make at least good and often outstanding progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Regular assessments quickly identify underachievement including the most vulnerable pupils and effective support is provided.
- Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress enables leaders to evaluate the impact of intervention, and modify as necessary.
- Excellent provision for pupils' personal and social development provides vulnerable pupils with a firm foundation for learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that teaching assistants are used more effectively in literacy and numeracy lessons to support pupils' learning
- improving pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy through developing the recently implemented curriculum initiatives.

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