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10 October 2008

Mrs M Green
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Green

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 01 October to look at work in literacy and numeracy.

As outlined in the 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 learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of six part-lessons and two intervention groups.

The overall effectiveness in narrowing the gap for pupils at risk of not reaching the expected level of attainment for their age in literacy and numeracy was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in literacy and numeracy is good. Standards are above average. The achievement of pupils working below the expected level of attainment for their age is good.

- In all key stages, pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy and reach standards that are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and pupils whose first language is not English attain higher than similar pupils nationally. Most of these pupils make good progress and some achieve exceptionally well, especially in reading.
- Pupils, including those most vulnerable, have high self esteem, behave exceptionally well, enjoy their lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning. The fostering of pupils' excellent personal development is a strength of the school and has a positive impact on pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy

The quality of teaching and learning for pupils working below the expected levels for their age in literacy and numeracy is good.

- Teachers expect all pupils to behave well; show respect for others; and have a determination to improve. In return, pupils respond positively.
- Pupils' academic progress and personal development are discussed regularly by all staff. Consequently, teachers and support staff know pupils well and are able to provide appropriate support when needed.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils feel safe and secure, and know they are valued. Consequently, self esteem, especially of the most vulnerable pupils, is high.
- Lessons are calm and orderly, and teachers create an excellent climate for learning, enabling all pupils to focus on their learning.
- Regular assessments are used to ensure that pupils' targets are challenging and work is matched carefully to their needs.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants provide good support for vulnerable pupils, individually and in groups.
- Marking is thorough and detailed and guides pupils very well towards the next steps of their learning.
- Where teaching is outstanding, all pupils have learned the skills of evaluating their own learning and that of others, and are provided with opportunities to do so. The school has plans to extend this to all lessons.

Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for children working below the levels expected for their age in literacy and numeracy is good.

- The school gives high priority to pupils' social and emotional development.

- A programme of phonics development has been implemented in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This focus is having a positive impact on raising standards and achievement in literacy. The school rightly intends to extend this programme into Key Stage 2.
- The curriculum is modified well to take into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. Additional language development opportunities and individual support are provided for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

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

- You and your leadership team have successfully created a culture of high expectation and achievement for all.
- Formal and informal monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision is helping raise the achievement of all pupils.
- All the staff work together exceptionally well and they place the personal development and academic achievement of all pupils at the heart of everything they do. This priority accounts for the high self esteem of vulnerable pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning and its impact on standards and achievement is monitored rigorously by senior leaders and subject coordinators.
- Regular and rigorous assessments enable all leaders and teachers to have a very good knowledge of the progress made by all pupils and to target support when required.
- Careful planning of the support for vulnerable pupils helps ensure that intervention provision is focused and targeted effectively.

English as an additional language

The level of expertise within the school to support pupils with learning English as an additional language is satisfactory.

- The coordination of English as an additional language is managed through the special educational needs coordinator. There is no specialist teacher or teaching assistant in the school.
- Although one member of staff has undertaken a training module for English as an additional language as part of her degree course several years ago, there is not a deep knowledge of the subject within the school.
- Some of the staff are fluent in Polish, Spanish and French.
- The supportive ethos of the school helps pupils who are learning English as an additional language settle in quickly and well.

Inclusion

- All groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- All pupils, including those most vulnerable, have high self-esteem and excellent attitudes to learning.
- Targeted support in literacy and numeracy is implemented for the most vulnerable pupils.
- A culture of equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils is a strong feature of the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing pupils' skills in evaluating their own learning
- extending provision for the teaching of phonics throughout the school.

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