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Mrs J Gibbons  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Gibbons

Ofsted survey programme visit - National Strategies survey 2008-09

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 13 January 2009, to look at the impact of the National Strategies on raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit focused on the work of the National Strategies in improving outcomes for children and young people. The visit focused particularly on the school's view of the impact of the National Strategies and how this is evaluated.

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 schools 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 outcomes of the visit included interviews with the headteacher, other senior staff and pupils. The inspector observed three part-lessons and scrutinised relevant documentation.

The leaders of this very successful school value the contribution the National Strategies have made in helping them prepare pupils for their futures. They have confidently tailored Strategy programmes to match the school's context and priorities. Drawing on themes promoted in 'Excellence and Enjoyment', the school has developed a rich curriculum that gives opportunities for pupils to develop key skills through interesting cross-curricular topics. Other Strategy strands that have a positive influence on teaching, learning and personal development include Letters and Sounds, Assessment for Learning and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). The school's good record of success means that it receives only limited support from Strategy consultants. Senior leaders value centrally-held update events and these help allay their concerns that high achieving schools are at risk of becoming isolated and unaware of good ideas for further improvement.

Lesson observations support the school's view that the National Strategies are having a positive influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Individual layered writing targets for pupils and the discrete teaching of phonics are having a positive impact on the quality of writing throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In a Year 6 lesson, drama activities supported high quality written work. The teacher explained clearly to pupils what they would learn, the criteria by which they would be assessed and how they would know when they had been successful. As result, the pupils are increasingly involved and responsible for their learning. The school has very clear records of pupils' progress and uses these effectively to plan additional support for pupils who could achieve more.

The above average standards in Year 6 from 2005 to 2008 support the school's positive view of the impact of the National Strategies. These standards represent good progress for the pupils, given that their skills and knowledge are typical for their age when they start. The school makes targeted use of National Strategy intervention programmes, such as Springboard and Additional Literacy Support, and all groups are making the same good progress.

I hope you find this feedback useful.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some schools by telephone after several months in order for us to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

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

Anthony O'Malley  
Her Majesty's Inspector