

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



27 February 2009

Mrs C Potter
Headteacher
Leeming RAF Community Primary School
Gatenby
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 9NQ

Dear Mrs Potter

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 11 February 2009 to look at the impact of the National Strategy on raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit focused on the work of the National Strategy in improving outcomes for children and young people. The visit focused particularly on the school's view of the impact of the National Strategy 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, senior staff, teachers and three groups of pupils. Parts of three lessons were observed and relevant documentation was scrutinised.

Senior leaders consider that the National Strategies have contributed to the high standards and rapid progress of pupils in recent years. Teachers agree that the National Strategies programmes that have had the most impact are 'Letters and Sounds', Excellence and Enjoyment, Assessment for Learning, and some of the Wave 2 and 3 interventions for pupils with learning difficulties in English and mathematics. Other programmes such as Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and the renewed literacy and numeracy frameworks have facilitated improvements to teaching and learning and confirmed that the high quality provision developed by the school was in line with national recommendations. The school has adopted and adapted resources and teaching techniques from these programmes which they judge

will meet the needs of their pupils. Teachers found the use of the frameworks website to be time consuming and unhelpful as a planning tool for literacy and numeracy because of its complexity. School leaders recognise the value of the National Strategies. However, they believe from experience that without strong leadership and a capable teaching team the impact of the National Strategies is not sustainable. The school appreciates the training and support from the local authority, but because it is classed as a highly effective school it does not benefit from consultant support.

Lesson observations support the school's view that the National Strategies have made a good contribution to improvements in teaching and learning. In two of the lessons observed younger pupils demonstrated that their phonic skills were developing fast. Children were confident to read and write independently and used their newly learnt phonic skills to help with the spelling of words when writing, and decoding when reading. Assessment information is used very effectively to place children into ability groups and work was pitched at the correct level so that rapid progress was evident. This is as a direct result of the adoption of the 'Letters and Sounds' programme. Other aspects of the use of the Strategies were threaded throughout the three lessons observed. For example the use of problem solving to regularly consolidate learning in mathematics was evident in one lesson observed in which pupils exclaimed that they enjoyed the regular opportunities they had to carry out this type of activity. Guided writing and pupils' self assessment was observed being used well in two lessons to successfully develop pupils' independence and skills as writers. The SEAL project has made a good contribution to the management of behaviour. In the three lessons observed the pupils were very well behaved, they were eager to talk and share their work and their attitude to learning was very good.

The school's results at Key Stages 1 and 2 confirm that pupils continue to achieve well. The school's very accurate tracking system demonstrates that pupils throughout the school make much faster progress than is average. This is because the school has a team of highly talented teachers supported by very strong leadership. The National Strategies have made a contribution to the impact of this provision on pupils' achievements by providing resources and programmes that the school has used if they judge that they will compliment their work. School leaders recognise that because of the extremely high mobility of pupils it is difficult to separate the impact of the National Strategies on standards and achievement. However, assessment information shows that in the Reception classes and in the present Key Stage 1 classes, where 'Letters and Sounds' has had time to have the most impact, pupils are making more rapid progress than in the past.

I hope you find this feedback useful.

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

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector