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Mr A Rogers
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rogers

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 27 January 2009 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 two intervention sessions and five part-lessons.

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 outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in literacy and numeracy is outstanding. The achievement of pupils working below the expected level of attainment for their age is outstanding.

- Pupils enter Year 5 with skills in literacy and numeracy which are above average. When pupils leave at the end of Year 8, standards are very high in all aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- 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 and achieve exceptionally well.
- Personal development of all pupils, including those most vulnerable is outstanding.
- Vulnerable pupils say that they feel valued by all the staff. They appreciate the additional care and attention they receive during lessons and in their withdrawal groups.

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 outstanding.

- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements.
- All groups of pupils are challenged exceptionally well because pupils' work is carefully matched to their abilities.
- Pupils know the level at which they are working and understand how to improve.
- Targets for improvement are an integral part of pupils' learning.
- Pupils not working at the expected levels receive excellent additional support from highly skilled teaching assistants.
- Classes are calm and orderly enabling all pupils to focus on their learning.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and help to provide a positive climate for learning.

Quality of the curriculum

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

- Small class sizes and setting of pupils by levels of attainment help teachers closely match work to pupils' needs.
- The highly structured schemes of work for literacy and numeracy are differentiated very effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Although there are some opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, the school is aware that this could be developed further.
- Information and communication technology is used well to stimulate and motivate pupils in lessons.

Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

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

- You have successfully created a common vision based upon high expectations and a relentless pursuit of excellence.
- Inclusion is strong. The belief that all children can achieve success is at the heart of the school.
- The achievement and well-being of all pupils are firmly at the centre of all decisions made and actions taken.
- An excellent system for school self-evaluation ensures that senior leaders know the school and individual pupils exceptionally well.
- Very effective and regular assessments help leaders and teachers plan for pupils' individual needs, set personalised targets and monitor progress.
- Systematic, regular and rigorous monitoring of the quality of provision ensures that pupils not achieving the expected levels are identified quickly and provided with high quality focused support.

English as an additional language

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

- The coordinator for inclusion has previous extensive experience of teaching pupils who are learning English as an additional language. She has organised support for the recently arrived pupil who is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and has plans to provide further language development opportunities in the near future.

Inclusion

Inclusion in literacy and numeracy is outstanding.

- The pastoral care and academic support given to all pupils is excellent.
- The achievement of vulnerable pupils in literacy and numeracy is very high.
- The personal, social and emotional development of vulnerable pupils is outstanding and provides a firm foundation for learning.
- Regular assessments and careful tracking of the progress made by vulnerable pupils in literacy and numeracy helps leaders and teachers monitor the effectiveness of support and modify if necessary.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

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