

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



25 February 2009

Mrs L Carter
Acting Headteacher
Abbey Hulton Primary School
School Road
Abbey Hulton
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST2 8BS

Dear Mrs Carter

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 23 February 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 senior staff, the learning mentor, the family support worker and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, and observation of four intervention sessions and six part-lessons.

There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language and only one pupil who is from a minority ethnic background.

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. The achievement of pupils working below the expected level of attainment for their age is good.

- Children enter into the Nursery with skills which are well below those typical for children of that age. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy accelerates as they move through the school. In Key Stage 2, most pupils make good progress and some achieve exceptionally well, especially in reading. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities attain higher than similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils are kind, tolerant and polite. They behave well and show a high level of respect for each other and adults. As they move through the school they grow in self-esteem, confidence and independence because of the exceptional level of pastoral support provided.

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.

- Highly skilled teaching assistants work very effectively with groups of pupils, especially those most vulnerable.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong.
- The school employs a wide range of strategies which successfully engage all pupils, especially boys, in their learning.
- Teachers use an effective range of class management skills which help ensure that lessons are calm and orderly.

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.

- High priority is given to pupils' social and emotional development. This helps all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, develop high self-esteem and contributes to their positive attitudes to learning.
- The school uses a large number of intervention programmes which are matched well to the needs of those pupils who are not reaching expected levels.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are developing but are not yet planned well enough to have a major impact on raising achievement.
- Good use of information and communication technology (ICT) stimulates and motivates pupils in lessons.

Leadership and management of literacy and numeracy

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

- All leaders have successfully created a common vision based upon improving achievement through providing a nurturing environment and raising the self-esteem of all pupils.
- Careful and regular monitoring of pupils' individual progress ensures that those who are in danger of not achieving the expected levels are provided with highly focused support.
- The decision to employ a high number of teaching assistants ensures that vulnerable pupils receive a good level of pastoral and academic support.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders do not monitor and evaluate effectively enough the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs provides good support and training for the teaching assistants.

English as an additional language

There are currently no pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

Inclusion

Inclusion in literacy and numeracy is good.

- The achievement of vulnerable pupils in literacy and numeracy is good.
- The personal, social and emotional development of vulnerable pupils is good and provides a firm foundation for learning.
- Regular assessments and careful tracking of the progress made by individual vulnerable pupils in literacy and numeracy helps teachers monitor progress and modify the support if necessary.
- Support for vulnerable pupils from a high number of skilled teaching assistants helps pupils achieve well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that senior leaders and subject leaders effectively monitor and evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils
- planning 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