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Mr A Bamford  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Bamford

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 24 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 staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four intervention sessions and eight part-lessons.

There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language and only one pupil with 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.

- The 2007 end of Key Stage 2 test results showed that pupils made good progress in literacy and outstanding progress in mathematics. Although the 2008 unvalidated test results showed that standards in literacy and numeracy were lower than in 2007, most pupils achieved well, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Standards in writing are average and the achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory.
- Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities attain higher than similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils who are working below the levels expected for their age in literacy and numeracy make good progress.
- Pupils grow in self-esteem and have positive attitudes to their learning.

## 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.

- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and supportive.
- A very high adult to pupil ratio and occasional one-to-one teaching enable personalised support to be given to the most vulnerable pupils.
- Teachers use a wide range of class management strategies to ensure that lessons are calm and orderly.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants make a major contribution to pupils' learning, especially in reading. However, in some lessons they are not used effectively enough.

## 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. Opportunities are taken regularly to praise pupils for their efforts, high standard of work and good behaviour.
- A wide range of intervention strategies, often led by trained teaching assistants, are used to meet 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 planned well and enable pupils of all abilities to reinforce their knowledge and skills.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively 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 good.

- All leaders have successfully created a common vision based upon raising the self-esteem of all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, through praise and support.
- Regular monitoring of the progress of individual pupils helps teachers and leaders provide additional support to those pupils not achieving the expected levels in literacy and numeracy.
- Regular training opportunities provided for teaching assistants help many pupils, especially the most vulnerable, receive a high level of individual and focused support.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders do not monitor and evaluate effectively enough the progress made by different groups of pupils.

## 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.

- Leaders are fully committed to inclusion and ensure that all pupils can access the wide range of activities provided.
- 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.
- Tracking of the progress of individual pupils helps teachers and leaders provide effective additional support when required.
- Support for vulnerable pupils from skilled teaching assistants helps pupils achieve well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raising standards and achievement in writing for all groups of pupils
- ensuring that senior leaders and subject leaders effectively monitor and evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils
- ensuring that teaching assistants are used effectively in all lessons.

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