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Mrs L Powell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Powell

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 November 2009 to look at work in literacy.

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 without their consent. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: discussions with senior leaders, literacy and assessment coordinators; discussions with the Early Years Foundation Stage leader; meetings with pupils; analysis of data; and lesson observations.

Features of good practice observed

- The consistent focus on the assessment of learning by all staff ensured that the standards in teaching and learning, in the lessons seen, were outstanding.
- The high-quality assessments of pupils' progress are moderated thoroughly and provide excellent information about all aspects of pupils' literacy development. The information is used effectively to raise the expectations of pupils and teachers and is instrumental in closing the gap for those at risk of falling behind.
- Targets are explained precisely to the pupils at the start, during and on completion of work. These are underpinned by exemplary marking. Staff frequently demand that pupils seek to improve the quality of their vocabulary, syntax and grammar by reference to 'up levelling', or going

that 'one step better'. Pupils know their levels and precisely how well they are progressing.

- The school's commitment to training and development ensures that staff have excellent subject knowledge in literacy. Close working relationships result in impressive teamwork and frequent professional discourse on the most effective teaching and learning strategies.
- The school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills is having a profound effect on improving pupils' writing skills. A good range of structured opportunities were recognised in the most recent Ofsted inspection report. These have been built upon by providing more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to engage in purposeful talk.
- Pupils' writing is of a consistently high standard across the curriculum. Pupils always write in their literacy book, regardless of the subject, and staff mark all work to the same agreed criteria. Staff expectations are high. Interventions match the needs of the pupils well and, from the outset, are compiled with clear objectives. They rarely entail removing pupils from lessons. The school has the confidence to adapt recognised intervention strategies to suit its own context. The pupils I met spoke positively about how much they enjoy writing.

Areas for development

- We discussed the need to develop partnerships with secondary schools to ensure the gains made by this group of pupils are sustained.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop literacy learning in the school.

As I explained previously, 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

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector