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20 November 2009

Mrs S Ward  
Headteacher  
Clara Grant Primary School  
Knapp Road  
Bow  
London  
E3 4BU

Dear Mrs Ward

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 5 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 inclusion coordinators; meetings with pupils; analysis of school data; scrutiny of literacy planning; and lesson observations.

Features of good practice observed

- You and other school leaders set high expectations for the standards pupils reach in literacy, especially for those who experience significant barriers to learning. Pupils eligible for free school meals reach higher-than-average standards in reading and writing and their progress is significantly above that achieved nationally.
- Senior leaders and teachers regularly review pupils' progress in reading and writing. They have a clear understanding of how effectively pupils are learning and the barriers some face. This leads to the early identification of any underachievement by individuals or groups.
- Intervention strategies in literacy are managed well. They are numerous and appropriate to need. Key to the continuing high standards for those most at risk of underachievement is the sharp evaluation by senior leaders of the quality of intervention and the ability to adapt published materials

to fit the needs of the pupils. The reading recovery programme, in particular, demonstrates pupils making rapid progress in reading.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They recognise the barriers faced by pupils who experience a paucity of vocabulary and thread rich opportunities for speaking and listening into lessons. These are having a very positive impact on improving standards in writing. In the lessons observed, pupils talked to each other to shape their ideas before starting any written work or oral reports.
- Staff model Standard English effectively when speaking to pupils. They are persistent in ensuring pupils use prepositions and verbs correctly when they speak and write. Pupils appreciate this and say that it helps them to 'hear what to write'.
- A clear policy for English, monitored closely by senior leaders, ensures consistency across the school in learning the basic skills in spelling, phonic work and handwriting. For example, all pupils observed hold their pencil correctly and form their letters well.
- In lessons and through marking, teachers provide encouragement and practical guidance on areas for improvement. Pupils recognise how this support helps them to become better readers and writers.
- Most pupils enjoy literacy. The oldest pupils in particular have a good knowledge of technical vocabulary and point to examples of it in their own work.

#### Areas for development

- We discussed ways to involve parents further in their children's learning, particularly for those pupils where English is not spoken in the home. The school plans to provide a family learning course in literacy so that parents can learn alongside their children.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop literacy 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

Gill Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector