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Mrs N Nelson-Taylor
Headteacher
Beech Hill Primary School
Linhope Road
West Denton
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
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Dear Mrs Nelson-Taylor,

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 January 2010 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

Features of good practice

- The school draws on the considerable strengths and competencies of its staff. Leadership and management of literacy are strong and leaders set a clear direction to a cohesive and enthusiastic team of staff.
- The development of pupils' emotional, personal and social skills is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy and benefit from opportunities to increase their self-esteem and confidence. This results in pupils showing excellent levels of behaviour, displaying a positive attitude to writing and reading tasks, and taking considerable pride in their achievements.
- Lessons are planned in detail and are designed carefully to progressively build pupils' writing skills over a sequence of lessons. Teachers regularly use their assessments to adapt these plans to meet the needs of pupils. For example, in a planned sequence of lessons, teachers are prepared to spend more time than originally envisaged to ensure that pupils have fully grasped key skills and concepts.

- Pupils have a very clear understanding of what they will be learning in each literacy lesson. They are helped to understand the relevance of the lesson and why it is appropriate for them. Teachers refer back to the purpose of the lesson to guide pupils' responses and to maintain high expectations of pupils' outcomes.
- Intervention programmes are based on a range of regular formal assessments and accurate ongoing assessments. These are used effectively to identify pupils who require additional support and to decide on the most appropriate type of support to improve pupils' key skills.
- The school has the confidence to use those intervention programmes that are most effective and to adapt those programmes on occasion to suit pupils' identified needs. For example, the school uses aspects of national intervention programmes to provide short, focused sessions. The judicious use of professional development ensures that the quality of teachers' and teaching assistants' delivery of intervention programmes is high.

Areas for development

- Increase the opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills in a range of contexts through the use of drama sessions and role-play scenarios.
- Ensure a consistent emphasis on high standards of handwriting to improve pupils' ability to identify errors and omissions in their use of punctuation and to increase the speed with which they transfer their ideas into print.

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

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector