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Mr P Merry
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Merry

Ofsted 2010–2011 survey inspection programme: assessing pupils' progress (APP)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 28 September 2010 to evaluate the impact of the APP initiative.

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: scrutiny of documentation; observations of teaching and learning; discussions with senior leaders, other staff and pupils, and a representative from the local authority.

The overall use of assessment to support learning is good.

The APP initiative

Impact on pupils' achievement and attainment

- The accuracy of teachers' assessment, supported by APP criteria, is contributing well to raising pupils' attainment and achievement.
- APP promotes the use of learning targets that keep pupils focused on their next steps in learning. The school is rightly considering how to involve older pupils more in setting their own targets.

Impact on the quality of pupils' learning and progress

- The school's effective use of APP criteria has strengthened systems for monitoring pupils' progress, identifying gaps in learning and tackling

underachievement through suitable interventions. The support provided for individual pupils through the tutor programme also contributes well to pupils' progress over time.

- Pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work. They have a secure understanding of success criteria that are accessible and easy to apply, and are confident in using them.
- APP is supporting pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding by ensuring that learning is sequenced and checked. As a result, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.
- APP is helping to support the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/disabilities, thereby promoting their inclusion in lesson activities.

Impact on the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning

- APP is improving teachers' subject knowledge and enabling them to focus sharply on pupils' mastery of subject-specific skills.
- The regular and effective evaluation of pupils' learning in relation to APP criteria enables teachers to build well on prior learning; planning takes good account of assessment information so that there is a closer match between learning objectives and pupils' needs.
- Teachers' marking is of good quality. APP criteria are adapted suitably to define success in learning and provide helpful written and verbal feedback to pupils. Guidance is effective because teachers ensure that it is followed up by pupils.
- APP is helping teachers to have a constructive dialogue about pupils' progress and attainment across key stages. Sessions to moderate teachers' assessment are developing consistency and confidence in assessment practice.

Impact on the curriculum

- APP is promoting a curriculum that is increasingly personalised to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and are motivated to do their best.
- It is enabling teachers to provide a varied range of assessment opportunities across the curriculum.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- extending opportunities for older pupils to be more involved in setting their own individual targets for learning.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop assessment practice in support of school improvement.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector