

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



22 March 2012

Mr M Melling  
Headteacher  
Northbrook Primary School  
Bannister Drive  
Leyland  
Lancashire  
PR25 2GB

Dear Mr Melling

**Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to primary schools**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visits on 13 September 2011 and 15 March 2012 to look at your work in transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

The visits 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: responses from parents and carers in Year 1 to a questionnaire; two interviews with Year 1 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents; observation of six lessons; and discussions with subject leaders.

Overall, the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is satisfactory.

**Key findings**

- This is a smaller than average-sized school. The Year 1 pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The majority are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class and seven pupils are taught in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class. Parents and carers initially had concerns about the transition from Reception into Year 1 because they were not told until the last week of term which class their child would be moving to. Following the first visit the school met with parents and carers to answer questions and allay their fears. The class groupings change annually dependent on the number of

pupils entering Reception and the school currently has mixed-age classes across the school.

- Pupils' skills and knowledge when they enter the school are variable from well-below to below those typical for children of their age. Pupils enter the Reception class from a wide range of pre-school settings and a small proportion have no pre-school experience.
- There is variation in the amount and quality of information the school receives from pre-school settings and this makes it difficult for the school to have an accurate picture of pupils' previous development. The Reception teacher visits every child in their home and establishes good relationships with parents and carers. She carries out her own assessments at the beginning of the year using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and a commercially produced scheme to assess pupils' communication and language skills.
- The assessments that teachers make are used effectively to plan learning for different pupil groups across the Reception Year and pupils make satisfactory and often good progress. They enter Year 1 with below average attainment which is improving year-on-year. During Year 1, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and more-able pupils often make good progress. Pupils who are disabled or those who have special educational needs and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable also make satisfactory progress. Pupils leave Key Stage 1 with average attainment and their achievement is satisfactory.
- All pupils said they were happy in school and enjoy learning. Their personal, social and emotional skills develop well. Pupils were observed in both classes sharing and responding well to adults and each other. They are enthusiastic and respond well to adult questions. Most can work independently and for sustained periods of time.
- Pupils feel safe in school and generally behave well. Where minor disruptions occur it is because the work set for them is not sufficiently challenging and they wander off task or they sit for too long and are not fully engaged in learning.
- Parents and carers have a good range of opportunities to visit the school and meet teachers before entry to the Reception class. There have been fewer opportunities to prepare parents and carers for the move to Year 1 but these have been improved significantly for the current Reception cohort.
- The school has produced a policy for the transition between Reception and Year 1 which involved a focus group of parents and carers. It outlines procedures and the school's philosophy for transition but currently the policy is not fully embedded into practice.
- There are some inconsistencies in the provision and curriculum between the two Year 1 classes. Year 1 pupils in the Reception class continue to access small group work and focused play activities and outdoor provision; while pupils in the Year 1/2 class have a more formal, desk-based

approach to learning with limited access to outdoor provision as the year progresses.

- The teachers are experienced early years practitioners and have a good understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage practice and methodology but they are hampered by the organisation and small numbers in some year groups and having to change their practice year-on-year. Good assessment procedures from Reception are carried through to Year 1. Teachers use the daily information they collect effectively to plan work which engages pupils and develops their basic skills.
- Teaching for the Reception and Year 2 pupils is often good but it is weaker for the Year 1 pupils because there is sometimes a lack of challenge in the activities planned for them due to the wide range of abilities in both classes. Pupils in Year 1 often carry out the same tasks regardless of their ability. The teaching of the 'sounds that letters make' is better. It moves along at a rapid pace and is organised into small groups according to pupils' ability resulting in pupils making good progress in developing and applying their knowledge, and satisfactory achievement.
- Senior leaders are aware that they need to do more to engage with pre-school settings and ensure accurate attainment on entry. Their philosophy of transition from Reception to Year 1 is developing but they are not yet secure in how they can sustain this when pupil groupings change. All staff know pupils and families very well and they are very effective in working with hard to reach parents and carers and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable during transition.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- improving pupils' progress across Year 1, by:
  - ensuring that pupils in Year 1 have equality of access and similar opportunities within the curriculum
  - improving the challenge for pupils in lessons
  - deploying teaching assistants more effectively in challenging Year 1 pupils and moving their learning forward
  - strengthening the school's transition policy to identify how good progress can be sustained when pupil groupings change
- improving the communication with pre-school providers to ensure the transfer of accurate data based on pupils' stages of development

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop transition at your school.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

**Joy Frost**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**