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Mr S Kelly
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Kelly

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 6 October 2011 and 12 and 13 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; interviews with Year 1 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1; scrutiny of relevant documents; and observation of four lessons.

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

Key findings

- Good systems are in place to ensure children's well-being during the transition. Children in Reception have the chance to get used to the rooms and facilities they will be using in Year 1. Parents and carers are given photographs of the school facilities to discuss with children over the summer holiday so that children are prepared for Year 1. Pupils settle quickly and are confident, emotionally ready, and are able to start learning.

- Effective systems are in place to transfer information about children from Reception into Year 1. Learning journals, writing books and assessment information are all passed up and teachers have well-organised opportunities to work together and discuss issues such as pupil groupings. However, an opportunity is missed to make better use of assessment information at the start of Year 1 which slows pupils' progress.
- Pupils' achievement across the transition and into Year 1 is satisfactory. Their attainment in mathematics is above average and higher than that in reading and writing. All groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress from the end of Reception with some, particularly the higher-attaining pupils, making better progress. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking skills, there is no systematic or progressive system of developing those skills across the transition into Year 1.
- Teaching in Year 1 is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In lessons with good teaching, pupils were actively involved, answering questions throughout and quickly learning new skills and knowledge through purposeful and interesting activities. The teacher modelled what pupils needed to learn and structured the lesson well so that all pupils could attain by the end of the lesson. In some lessons, however, particularly at the start of the year, pupils made only satisfactory progress because they spent too much time listening inactively.
- Teachers in Reception begin to arrange their class organisation, teaching and curriculum in the summer term so that it will mirror more closely aspects of what will happen in Year 1. For example, group teaching sessions of approximately 10 minutes build in the summer to 20 minutes. This helps children to concentrate on teacher-led activities. There is not, however, as much similar mirroring of Reception practice at the start of Year 1 as there could be. As a result, pupils' progression slows.
- Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree they are kept informed about the children's development and learning via homework, reading books, website notes, newsletters, formal meetings, learning journals. They are positive about the transition and about the support given to their children.
- Leaders and managers in the school have high expectations of pupils' progress and have started to monitor and evaluate the impact of transition on pupils' achievement. The transition is well organised and staff are deployed effectively to make the transition as smooth as possible for pupils. Monitoring systems are not as effective as they could be in evaluating pupils' progress because mathematics monitoring is not divided up into its different aspects, namely calculating, shape, space and measures, and counting. Monitoring of progress is also hampered because different assessment systems are used across the Nursery, Reception and in Year 1.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- monitoring the different aspects of mathematics through Reception into Year 1

- developing pupils' speaking skills systematically and progressively through Year 1
- harmonising more closely the teaching and curriculum particularly in the summer term of Reception and autumn term of Year 1.

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

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector