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Mrs Sue Lidgley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lidgley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Evaluation of the Primary and Secondary National Strategies

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 26 September 2007 to look at work in the Primary National Strategy (PNS).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the PNS, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of assessment for learning (AfL).

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

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

The overall effectiveness of the PNS was judged to be satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement is good. The impact of AfL on pupils' achievement and personal development is satisfactory.

- Standards in English are satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' progress in the lessons observed was good overall.
- The school is making good progress in improving standards of pupils' writing and spelling.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and sometimes outstanding. They are polite, well-behaved and very supportive of each other.

Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. The impact of AfL on teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan in detail for the two mixed age classes. They use their detailed knowledge of individual pupils' needs to support their planning, but learning objectives are sometimes framed in terms of what pupils will do rather than what they will learn.
- Learning support assistants and other adult helpers provide good and highly flexible support for pupils.
- Teachers skilfully manage the needs of the wide age range within the two classes in the school. There are many examples of interesting and motivating activities which are well targeted at the needs of individuals.
- The school's increasing focus on personalised learning is evident in lessons and builds well on the excellent knowledge of the strengths and needs of individual pupils.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and is supported by a good range of enrichment activities. The impact of AfL on the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Statutory requirements are met. The PNS framework is used as a tool to support teaching and learning.
- Long and medium term planning are not yet formalised into a whole school scheme of work. This area for improvement has been identified as a priority within the school development plan.
- Provision is supported by effective use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Pupils make good use of the computer suite and are practised at sharing the four computers. This facility will increase over the coming year with the purchase of more computers and software.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in English are good. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of AfL is satisfactory.

- There is a clear vision for the subject, reflected in the school development plan. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates good knowledge of strengths and areas for development in the subject.

- Staff training meets needs, including those of the learning support assistants.
- Regular systems for monitoring teaching exist and helpful feedback is provided. Whilst senior leaders have an accurate view of teaching, they do not yet use this information to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning.
- Liaison and transition between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are currently satisfactory. Work to improve transition arrangements for vulnerable pupils in Year 3 has been successful, including the flexibility to return to the Key Stage 1 class if needed.

Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL overall is satisfactory.

- Many aspects of the national strategies are in place, although not always formalised in documentation.
- The current assessment and marking policies explain the school's expectation that adults will provide regular feedback to pupils. Constant verbal interaction between staff and individual pupils is evident in all classes, but not always recorded in writing.
- Targets are set for all pupils and they are increasingly involved in the monitoring of these targets through their individual assessment files.

Inclusion

The impact of AfL on inclusion is good.

- Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good or very good progress.
- Planning and the good knowledge of individual pupils ensure that pupils' needs are well identified and that their progress is monitored well.
- Where appropriate, the school makes use of strategy intervention activities and programmes.
- Grouping arrangements are flexible and where appropriate, pupils are taught across age groups and in some cases across key stages.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing an overarching scheme of work for English incorporating existing practice, and supporting in particular transition between Key Stages 1 and 2
- ensuring that learning objectives focus consistently on what pupils will learn and not just on the activities that they will undertake
- building on existing monitoring practice to collate findings and use these to inform future developments in the teaching of English.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English and assessment for learning in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mary Ryan
Her Majesty's Inspector