

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 October 2007

Mrs Karen Willis
Headteacher
St James Church of England Primary
School
Old Jamaica Road
Bermondsey
London
SE16 4SU

Dear Mrs Willis

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 16 October 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 good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good. The impact of AfL on pupils' achievement and personal development is also good.

- The majority of pupils arrive at the school with skills well below those expected for their age. Rigorous assessment procedures introduced in 2005, are attributed to the exceptional rise in standards in 2007.
- Inspection evidence supports the school's assessment that recent improvements are likely to be sustained in 2008.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are keen to learn and respond very well to opportunities to work collaboratively.

Quality of teaching and learning in mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. The impact of AfL on teaching and learning is also good.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use their detailed knowledge of individual pupils' needs to support their planning.
- Learning objectives are written so that pupils can easily understand them. Tasks are often practical and collaborative work helps pupils to link challenging mathematical concepts.
- Teaching assistants provide good quality support. They keep pupils focussed, support them through good questioning and provide feedback to class teachers on how individuals have progressed in the lesson.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the mathematics curriculum is good. The impact of AfL on the curriculum is good.

- The school's topic based curriculum makes useful links between different subjects and relates to pupils' interests. It provides many opportunities for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils enjoy the games, practical activities and well planned investigations which challenge their thinking and understanding of mathematics.
- Teachers plan extended opportunities for pupils to talk about problem-solving methods.
- The progress of all groups is carefully monitored. Teaching assistants support is programmed carefully and used effectively to overcome barriers to learning.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in mathematics are good. The effectiveness of leadership and management of AfL is good.

- Senior leaders have identified aspects of the strategy that strategically support and develop their vision. For example, they have focused on how pupils learn and extended opportunities for pupils to develop their

speaking and listening. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensures AfL policy is implemented consistently across the school.

- The school's self evaluation procedures are good. Teaching and learning in mathematics are kept regularly under review and very helpful lesson observation feedback is provided for teachers. As a result, teaching has improved.

Assessment for learning

The impact of AfL overall is good.

- Clear vision from the headteacher, very good teamwork between the subject leaders and the induction and training for all staff effectively ensures a common understanding of AfL.
- AfL is a key feature of the school's successful drive to raise standards. It is integrated into teaching across the curriculum and there is clear evidence of its positive impact on teaching and learning and therefore on pupils' progress.
- The school has made good use of the PNS and local authority programmes so that they combine to form a coherent strategy for developing AfL.

Inclusion

The impact of AfL on inclusion is good.

- All pupils make good progress and careful monitoring identifies those who fall behind or fail to meet targets.
- Appropriate interventions are implemented, evaluated and adjusted regularly.
- Teaching assistants' support of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are systematically addressed.
- The school's Pupil Development Centre, provides very good support for pupils at risk of underachieving.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- increasing opportunities for pupils to assess themselves and others to extend their learning
- establishing an agreed marking policy across the school which supports and challenges all pupils.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop mathematics 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

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector