

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@Ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs Percival
Headteacher
St Pius X RC Primary School
Amersham Road
Middlesbrough
TS3 7HD

Dear Mrs Percival

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 22 January 2008 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 intervention strategies.

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 two lessons and five intervention groups

The overall effectiveness of the National Strategy was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement in English is good. The impact of intervention strategies on pupils' achievement and personal development is good.

- The majority of pupils make good progress in English. Standards are below average but improving.
- Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with a learning difficulty, make good progress. Teachers quickly identify pupils who are

not making sufficient progress towards their targets and help them to catch up by providing well-planned interventions.

- Pupils in intervention groups enjoy their work and are keen to succeed. Many lack independence and confidence, which is a barrier to their progress.

Quality of teaching and learning in English

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The impact of intervention strategies on teaching and learning is good.

- Teaching assistants have good skills in leading intervention groups. Their well-planned teaching of phonics helps lower attaining pupils to make good progress in reading. Particular strengths are their use of resources, including computers, and the way they link hearing, seeing and writing sounds to consolidate pupils' understanding.
- Staff leading intervention groups use assessment well. They plan work that meets the pupils' needs and they help pupils to understand what they need to do to achieve higher standards.
- Use of assessment is a strong feature of the overall good quality of teaching in English. For example, pupils improve their achievement in writing by assessing their own work against clear criteria provided by the teacher.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. The impact of intervention strategies in the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Pupils have the opportunity to develop a good range of reading and writing skills in English. Strong emphasis is given to improving pupils' speaking and listening because the school has correctly identified weaknesses in these skills as a barrier to learning.
- Staff carefully plan their intervention programmes to ensure that they meet the needs of their pupils. This involves modifying National Strategy programmes or selecting them from elsewhere. They adapt the programmes to suit any age range where assessment records indicate that pupils are making insufficient progress towards their targets.
- Pupils' work in intervention groups does not always link closely enough to their work in lessons. When this happens, pupils' learning is disjointed and they lose the opportunity to consolidate their new skills.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management in English are good. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of intervention strategies is good.

- The effective use of interventions is part of the leadership team's determination to improve the achievement of all pupils.
- The leadership team has good arrangements for using assessment information to identify pupils who are underachieving and would benefit from intervention.
- The school's interventions have developed piecemeal as teachers have responded to the needs of the pupils. The leadership team is now bringing this work together into one strategic plan in order to give clearer direction to future provision.
- The leadership team has started to evaluate the interventions in the plan to check that they give value for money in terms of improving pupils' progress, but there is still work to be done on this.
- Arrangements for the training and deployment of teaching assistants enable them to make a good contribution to the quality of interventions.

Intervention strategies and Inclusion

The impact of intervention strategies overall and on inclusion is good.

- All groups of pupils make good progress because the school is effectively reducing the social and emotional barriers to their learning as well as those related to their basic reading and writing skills.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making closer links between pupils' work in intervention groups and their work in lessons
- completing the school's plan for interventions and checking that it is effective in improving pupils' progress.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop English and intervention strategies 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

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector