

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



15 May 2009

Ms A Murphy
Headteacher
Bishop Douglass School Finchley
Hamilton Road
Finchley
London
N2 0SQ

Dear Ms Murphy

Ofsted survey programme visit - National Strategies survey 2008-09

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 February 2009 to look at the impact of the National Strategies on raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit focused on the work of the National Strategies in improving outcomes for children and young people. The visit focused particularly on the school's view of the impact of the National Strategies and how this is evaluated.

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 schools 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 outcomes of the visit included interviews with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers and students. The inspector observed four part-lessons and scrutinised relevant documentation.

The school reports that National Strategies' programmes have had a positive impact on classroom practice and improving student performance. The school has however, over a number of years, carefully tailored and co-ordinated strands to reflect both the school's context and to ensure coherence within the school's own effective improvement agenda. 'Assessment for Learning' (AfL) and intervention strategies, in particular, are considered to have successfully supported improvements in teaching and learning and helped key groups, including those with additional learning needs, to progress well and close the attainment gap.

In addition, the 'new arrivals excellence' programme is regarded as being especially beneficial, due to the high number of students joining the school throughout the year, including students who are new to English. Recently introduced strands including 'social and emotional aspects of learning' and 'assessing pupils' progress' are also already enhancing the school's positive work on behaviour and assessment. Good relationships exist between the school and local authority, with effective partnership work in place. Support and advice offered by consultants is valued and the school works productively with the school improvement partner.

Observed classroom practice provided clear evidence that AfL is strongly influencing teaching and learning in both core and foundation subjects. Thoughtful planning, skilful questioning and the consistent use of assessment to accelerate pupils' progress were key features in the best lessons. As a result, in these lessons students were fully engaged in all activities, including practical work with both groups and partners. Meetings with students confirmed that they enjoy lessons with interesting tasks which link new learning to what they already know.

Between 2005 and 2008, there has been a positive trend of improved attainment overall. Standards for Year 11 students have risen consistently and are now closer to the national average. Students with additional educational needs and those with English as an additional language or new to English are achieving broadly in line with their peers and progressing well. This confirms the school's view that National Strategies' programmes have helped to improve and sustain performance outcomes; albeit their impact has been strengthened by the way they have been appropriately adapted to meet the school's needs.

I hope that you find this feedback useful.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon
Her Majesty's Inspector