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24 February 2009

Mrs W Hutchinson
Headteacher
Monkspath Primary School
Farmhouse Way
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Dear Mrs Hutchinson

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 and other senior staff. The inspector observed three part-lessons and scrutinised relevant documentation.

School leaders and teachers value the contribution the National Strategies have made in helping them prepare pupils for their futures. They tailor Strategy programmes to match the school's context and judge that strands such as Assessing Pupils' Progress, Assessment for Learning, Letters and Sounds and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning have had a positive impact on teaching, learning and personal development. The school's above average standards means that it receives limited support from national strategy consultants. However, subject leaders value the support they do receive and feel that this enables them to develop practice in school appropriately without additional external support. The senior leadership team

is aware that high attaining schools are at risk of becoming isolated and unaware of good ideas for further improvement. To avoid this, it makes effective use of online resources to keep well informed of the range of ideas promoted through the Strategy and in other local authorities.

Lesson observations support the school's view that the National Strategies are having a positive influence on the quality of teaching and learning. In the three lessons observed, pupils were well motivated and clear about what they were learning. Teachers use assessment information to plan activities to meet the needs of the abilities in the class. Strategy principles were evident in a literacy lesson where drama activities contributed well to high quality written work and in a mathematics lesson where skilful questioning developed reasoning skills and deepened understanding. Discussions with pupils and evidence in their books show that they are increasingly taking responsibility for their learning. The school has rigorous systems for tracking pupil progress and uses these effectively to plan additional support for those who could achieve more.

The above average standards at the end of Year 6 from 2005 to 2008 support the school's positive view of the impact of the National Strategy. In 2008, the proportion of pupils making two levels progress during Key Stage 2 rose significantly. These standards represent satisfactory progress for the pupils, given that their skills and knowledge are above what is expected when they enter Nursery. The school has data showing accelerated progress by pupils who receive targeted support through intervention programmes such as Springboard, Early Learning Skills and Additional Learning Skills during this school year. If sustained, these gains will contribute to a narrowing of the attainment gap for some groups of pupils. This was not the case in 2005-2008. The discrete teaching of phonics is having a positive impact on the quality of reading and writing throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

I hope you find this feedback useful.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some schools by telephone after several months in order for us to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector