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Ms A Phillips  
Headteacher  
Old Ford Primary School  
Wrights Road  
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London  
E3 5LD

Dear Ms Phillips

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 September 2009 to look at work to overcome pupils' socio-economic barriers to attain or exceed nationally expected levels for their age in literacy.

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 without their consent. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: discussions with senior leaders, middle managers and the extended schools coordinator. I also visited four lessons, interviewed pupils and scrutinised data, pupils' work and documentation provided by the school.

Features of good practice observed

- You and your staff are clearly determined to enable all pupils to reach or exceed national standards of attainment in literacy. In particular, to narrow the attainment gap for those pupils who are most at risk of falling behind.
- The quality of teaching in literacy and the support from other adults in the classroom, that I observed, was of a high order.
- You give a strong focus to independent learning, which is evident in the pupils' willingness to learn. This is particularly evident among those pupils experiencing significant barriers and who find learning difficult.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage team is successful in encouraging parents to become involved in their children's learning and to become learners themselves. The proportion of parents' who take up the extensive extended schools programme provided is good.

- You provide a good literacy curriculum which is adapted effectively for pupils who have wide-ranging individual needs. This is underpinned by an appropriate programme of staff development and training, ensuring that staff knowledge and skills in literacy are first class.
- The initiatives you have introduced to motivate children complement the school's well-targeted learning support. For example, the creation of a Nurture group, for pupils who have difficulty managing their emotions and behaviour, supports pupils to develop their skills in literacy well.
- You ensure that pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties benefit from a range of therapies and opportunities to access specialist services, which supports their progress in literacy.
- Pupils are taught how to work as part of a group through the judicious use of intervention strategies, grouping and setting. This ensures that pupils learn together, benefit from each others' contributions and achieve exceptionally well.
- Pupils report considerable improvements to their motivation, confidence and self-esteem as a result of the clear targets set for them to improve their writing. They commented on how beneficial it was to know what they are expected to learn in lessons. They readily identified the characteristics of a good learner.

#### Areas for development

- No further areas for development were identified. However, we discussed developing partnerships with associated secondary schools to ensure the gains made by this group of learners are sustained.

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

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

Jonathan Palk  
Her Majesty's Inspector