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Mrs J Spencer
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Spencer

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to primary schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, parents and carers and pupils, during my visits on 14 October 2011 and on 22 and 23 February 2012 to look at your work in transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

The visits 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: observation of seven lessons; scrutiny of relevant documents; responses from parents and carers in Year 1 to a questionnaire; interviews with Year 1 parents, carers and pupils; discussions with senior and middle leaders and teachers in Reception and Year 1.

Overall, the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is good.

Key findings

- All groups of pupils achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 because teaching is consistently good. Tasks and activities are well-matched to their differing needs, especially in literacy and numeracy based activities. Attainment is high at the end of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. In the past girls outperformed boys in writing. The gap was reduced through careful adjustments to the curriculum.
- Teachers and teaching assistants enthuse pupils successfully. The curriculum is well organised and contains many interesting and motivating

aspects. In Nursery and Reception, children are actively and successfully encouraged to make real choices, pose questions, work together and show independence. In Year 1, staff help pupils develop such skills further, which supports their learning well. Staff are careful to get the right balance between encouraging pupils to show initiative and providing the rigorous teaching they need. As a result, classrooms and outdoor areas, across the key stages, are always 'buzzing' with worthwhile, enjoyable learning activity. The well-organised programme of personal, social and health education also contributes greatly to this.

- The school's assessment systems are carefully constructed and managed. Rigorously collected Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data are well used to organise pupils into groups at the start of Year 1 and lead to high expectations of pupils, including any who appear to be underachieving. High-quality, robust sharing of information and consideration of individual pupils' needs by staff, involving parents and carers, means that pupils are challenged and supported well throughout the transition. Staff begin to make assessments under National Curriculum levels early in Year 1. This suits the development level of most pupils and enables the school to measure progress in Year 1 readily.
- The school has developed its approach to the teaching of phonics (linking of letters and sounds) throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The specific autumn term programme for Year 1 pupils needing further support in phonics is very well planned and delivered by Nursery staff. It provides consistency for the pupils involved who make good progress. Other pupils who may require particular provision during the transition, such as those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with hearing impairment, are supported well.
- Parents and carers say that the school is very approachable and are pleased with the care shown to their children and the transition arrangements. However, you accept the view expressed by some that more information could be provided to parents and carers about the assessments made of their children through observations.
- Your strong leadership of the school is clear in the way, for example, that pupils really enjoy their demanding and challenging learning, as you wish them to. Their transition into Year 1 is carefully and successfully managed so that pupils experience increasingly demanding learning in a familiar, active style. Staff share these aims. Together, you are rightly considering how the curriculum could be further developed to be yet more challenging and exciting, while sustaining and improving further on the high standards reached.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to develop the curriculum, and consider further innovation, across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to raise attainment even higher and embed further the active and inquiring learning approach in use across the school

- planning more tasks for pupils which are matched closely to their individually assessed needs in the foundation subjects in Year 1.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop transition at your school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector