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Mrs A Keywood
St William of Perth Roman Catholic
Primary School
Canon Close
Maidstone Road
Rochester
Kent
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Dear Mrs Keywood,

Medway Early Reading Survey

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and pupils, during my visit on 7 November 2013 to look at work in early reading. The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our survey report to your local authority.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with senior leaders, including staff with responsibility for early reading and governors, observation of four lessons, scrutiny of relevant documentation and listening to pupils read.

Achievement in early reading

Achievement in early reading is good.

- Pupils are independent, enthusiastic learners who are keen to have a go in both reading and writing. They read fluently, with expression and they use their skills automatically in all lessons to work out unfamiliar words.
- Pupils read and write increasingly well throughout the school and attainment is above average at both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The youngest children rapidly learn the letters and the sounds they make and begin quickly to read simple words. This is built on throughout Key Stage 1 and means that, by the end of Year 1, a much higher than average proportion exceeds the expected standard in the phonic screening

check. The proportion of boys achieving the standard rose sharply last year.

Teaching and learning in early reading

The quality of teaching and learning in early reading is good.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of early reading and phonics. They use their knowledge in discrete phonics sessions and other lessons to help pupils learn how to read and write confidently.
- Good strategies and routines are well established so that the teaching is effective. The consistent use of these strategies and routines mean that both adults and pupils know what is expected.
- Pupils are active and engaged throughout lessons. There are good opportunities for them to practice their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Occasionally, even more use could be made of these strategies to ensure the pupils are achieving as much as possible in every lesson.

Leadership and management of early reading

The leadership and management of early reading are outstanding.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have invested considerable time and energy into promoting the school's approach to early literacy. They have high expectations and these are shared by the school team. As a result, teaching is good and pupils achieve very well.
- The reading leader demonstrates excellent practice in the classroom. She carries out weekly monitoring, support and discussions about what is working well and how the teaching and learning of early reading could be even more effective.
- Regular tracking of pupils' skills is used very effectively to raise the targets for some pupils and provide individual support for others. The impact of this support is regularly evaluated to make sure it is working.
- The school uses many successful strategies to involve parents and carers in supporting their children's reading.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using the outstanding practice in the school to increase the opportunities for pupils to be active, involved learners in all lessons.

I hope that these observations are useful to you as you continue your drive to raise standards in reading at your school. A copy of this letter is being sent to the Chair of the Governing Body and also to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector