

Mrs Kathy Brent, Headteacher.

Princes School and Assessment Centre,
Selborne St, Liverpool, L8 1YQ.

1st April 2015.

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for inviting me to visit your school on Wednesday 25th March, 2015 to discuss the Basic Skills Quality Mark. I would like to extend my thanks to Juliette Gelling, other school colleagues, pupils and parents for making the visit so purposeful and pleasurable. The preparation and presentation of evidence to support the process and show impact was exemplary. I am delighted to recommend the school for renewal of the Basic Skills Quality Mark and congratulate you on your success. The award will last for 3 years.

The process was conducted over the course of a half day and involved:

- Examination of key evidence.
- A focus on key elements of
 - a whole school strategy and planning to improve performance in basic skills
 - a commitment to improving the skills of all staff in the school to teach and extend basic skills
 - the use of a range of teaching approaches and learning styles to improve basic skills
- A learning walk throughout the school focused on basic skills.
- Discussions with the Deputy Headteacher, literacy and numeracy coordinators, parents, and pupils.

I have summarised below key judgements that have supported my decision based on the evidence provided prior to and on the day:

- The Basic Skills Quality Mark self-evaluation successfully identifies the school's practices supporting further development of basic skills, provides clear evidence that all criteria are being met and identifies impact and areas for further development. It clearly evidences the focus on basic skills for all pupils.
- A comprehensive and responsive whole school strategy is in place to drive continued improvements in basic skills that is central to the School Development Plan. As an example, the extra teaching assistant in every classroom to support behaviour for learning has supported progress in basic skills as shown in CASPA.
- Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school and all that it does for their child. Parents recognise that the children are taught well and that the school has high expectations focused on their child's learning. Pupil premium funding is used to support and accelerate basic skills.
- The school's CPD programme is a key driver for improving the progress of pupils with basic skills, including literacy and numeracy and is carefully tailored and personalised to the context of the school and its children. Performance management targets reflect the



drive for basic skills. There are opportunities during INSET and staff meetings to continue to improve standards in teaching and learning throughout school.

- The school demonstrates a strong commitment to equal opportunities. Specific interventions are carefully selected to respond to need. Individual support and excellent deployment of teaching assistants and specialist teachers help raise the skills and confidence of children who all make progress.
- The parents interviewed were very appreciative of the interventions and clearly articulated the improvements made to their child's reading.
- SLT are creative and strategic in their drive for further whole school improvement in basic skills: The school has also just been awarded the Inclusion Charter Mark to further demonstrate this.
- Procedures for the monitoring of planning and evaluation of progress are reviewed strategically by SLT and refined as necessary. Interventions and whole school strategies are monitored for impact and all staff are held accountable for the attainment and progress of their class. SLT ensure that there is appropriate challenge and high expectations.
- The Basic Skills Quality Mark self-evaluation evidenced that SLT ensure processes and procedures are in place to provide comprehensive analyses of the assessment of pupil performance in basic skills, using formative and summative assessment and comparisons to national and local schools where suitable and possible, e.g. through CASPA. Outcomes are used to develop teaching and learning.
- Children are able to give examples of how the school supports their learning, e.g. through the Blue Coat Arts project and visits throughout the curriculum, which is bespoke and meets the needs of all children. This is clearly evidenced through learning journeys and other methods adapted to meet the needs of children.

In addition, the school learning environment clearly evidenced the centrality of basic skills and high quality classroom and corridor wall displays reflected a wide and varied curriculum.

The behaviour of students observed during the visit, including during the learning walk was exemplary. Children were enthusiastically involved in their learning, keen to share what they were doing and rightly proud of their school. Staff were both knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The school was an oasis of learning and clearly a jewel in our city.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone on behalf of School Improvement Liverpool for the school's strong and continued commitment towards improving pupils' basic skills.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Boyce

Judy Boyce

Senior School Improvement Officer, Collaboration and Networking.

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