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Mr Maycock
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Maycock

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: the quality and impact of partnership provision in schools for children in service families

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 13 and 14 September 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of partnerships, including the quality of the partnerships between schools and agencies and between schools and parents, I looked at how effective the partnerships are in improving children's personal well-being and learning. I also considered the nature of the support given to these children, including those in the most vulnerable circumstances, or those who have a particular special educational need or disability, and the arrangements to ensure the continuity of provision during children's move in and out of your school.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: discussions with senior staff and those responsible for coordinating special educational needs; a review of the school's documentation; and meetings with parents and groups of students from service families. Discussions were also held with representatives from the Connexions Service, an educational psychologist from Staffordshire County Council and the School Nurse.

The school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel is good.

Key features

- The school's staff place significant emphasis on ensuring appropriate individual care and, where required, provide additional support for all students, including those with a service family background. This commitment is clearly represented through the school's policies and systems.
- While students are inducted into the school, effective systems have been established to identify any additional and/or special needs they may have. Parents particularly welcome the systems for identifying gaps in literacy skills or indications of a specific learning difficulty.
- The school actively pursues the records of new students and is thorough in preparing detailed information for those leaving the area to join another school. The information from these records assists students from service families to secure better continuity in their education.
- New students, including those from service families, acknowledge the quality of care they receive during their transition into the school; consequently, they quickly settle into their studies.
- Additional resources have been deployed carefully, further to those supplied by the local authority, to ensure that prompt assessment of students' needs. One parent from a service family appreciated how quickly the school had identified and tackled a gap in her son's literacy skills.
- The school has established close working relationships with a broad range of external agencies which ensures that students receive carefully targeted specialist advice. The school and local authority educational psychologists work together effectively to maximise the specialist support they can provide.
- Students welcome the support available from teaching and non-teaching staff in 'Gazebo House'. This is increasingly providing a 'one-stop shop' for support, assisting vulnerable students and those who fall behind in their mainstream classes.
- A flexible curriculum for Key Stage 4 students allows those who arrive mid-year, including those from service families, to pursue a personalised programme. The school works hard to ensure students secure continuity in their studies. The development of intensive one-year GCSE courses assists students who join during Year 10 or 11 to obtain external accreditation. Partnerships built up through the local 14–19 consortium are expanding the opportunities for students to pursue vocational courses.
- The International Award achieved by the school acknowledges strengths in developing community cohesion, students' global understanding and the priority placed on foreign languages in the curriculum. However, opportunities to celebrate the experiences of service families who have previously lived overseas are underdeveloped.
- Students from service families, where a parent or a sibling are serving in a conflict zone, would welcome additional specialist support to strengthen their coping strategies. Currently, this is not specifically considered or provided.

- The school recognises that its systems to evaluate outcomes are based on monitoring the performance of individuals, rather than groups of students. It is, therefore, reviewing how it can improve its monitoring of groups, including those students from service families.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with children and young people and their parents who are in families of service personnel.

As I 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lowery
Her Majesty's Inspector