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Mr J Somers
Headteacher
Danecourt Community School
Hotel Road
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Dear Mr Somers

Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: school governance

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and governors, during my visit on 10 and 11 November 2010 to look at school governance.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in school governance. The publication will include case studies about individual schools. If Danecourt Community School is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment before publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the identification of features of excellent practice included: meetings with you and your deputy, a range of governors, the clerk to the governing body and subject leaders; and the scrutiny of relevant documents.

Features of best practice

- Strong relationships between you, your staff and governors are based on open and honest communications and driven by a consistent and shared commitment to doing what is best for the pupils.
- Clarity about the roles and responsibilities of governors and a shared understanding of how they differ from but complement your role as the headteacher make a significant contribution to sustaining highly effective leadership.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the work of the school because you and your staff provide them with a wide range of detailed, relevant and candid information.
- Governors visit the school regularly to see for themselves how the school is working and the impact of the decisions that have been made.

Information from the visits is recorded consistently and shared systematically.

- The role of the clerk is central to the efficient and effective running of the governing body: ensuring that actions are taken to meet statutory duties; that governors are well prepared for meetings; and that minutes accurately record decisions and agreed actions are followed up.
- A clearly defined committee structure makes very effective use of governors' time and their varied skills, interests and expertise.
- The sharp focus of the curriculum committee on high-quality teaching and learning for every pupil is pivotal to the cohesion of the governing body.
- Governors skilfully balance the support and challenge that they provide for leaders at all levels. They regularly seek the views of staff, parents and pupils, listen with an open mind to proposals, ask searching questions, analyse reports and consider the implications for staff and pupils. Consequently, staff feel valued and challenge is well received and viewed as supportive.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to further develop governance.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector