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Mrs W Collins
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Collins

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 pupils, during my visit on 27 and 28 September 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for pupils 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 pupils' personal well-being and learning. I also considered the nature of the support given to these pupils, including those in the most vulnerable circumstances, or those who have a particular special educational need and/or disability, and the arrangements to ensure the continuity of provision when pupils' 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: meetings with you, your staff and the chair of the governing body. I also met with groups of parents and pupils, and scrutinised a range of school documentation including information about the pupils' attendance and achievement.

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

Key features

- Your commitment to being a UNICEF Rights Respecting school drives your outstanding work with all pupils, their families and your wider community. It can be seen, particularly, in the way adults and pupils work together to create a calm, confident and respectful climate for learning.
- Central to your work with pupils from service families is the excellent relationship you have with their parents. All staff in the school are committed to, and are successful in, making parents feel welcome, listened to and supported, especially when joining the school partway through the year. Parents appreciate that you treat them equally, and yet are also sensitive to their particular needs, such as when dads are deployed on active service. Parents also value highly the fact that the school provides pupils with consistency and stability. You and your parents rightly see this as key to the pupils' academic and personal development.
- Academic outcomes for pupils from service backgrounds are consistently in line with their peers and sometimes better. By the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. Indeed, in 2010 the proportion of pupils who attained the highest levels was significantly better than that seen nationally.
- The attendance of pupils from service families is also in line with their peers. Overall, attendance is above average for most and high for nearly two thirds of pupils. The attendance of a small number of service pupils is below average. Often, this is because you show compassion when authorising absence for holidays to be taken in term time when parents are home following long deployments.
- The school's thorough tracking and assessment systems enable you and your teachers to carefully monitor the progress of individuals and groups, including service pupils. This information is used very effectively by teachers to identify any underachievement and to put in place systems to support pupils who are underperforming. Accurate data show that there are no differences in the rate of progress made by service pupils and their peers.
- Excellent systems are in place to assess promptly those pupils who join the school at times outside the usual. These are supplemented well by observing pupils carefully as they settle into the school and very clear ongoing communication with parents. As a result, all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs, are very well served. Your Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the school's team of teaching assistants are highly trained. They are skilled in using a range of support programmes and evaluate these regularly to ensure that the best programmes are used to support pupils. They are regarded highly by parents.
- Your school works very successfully with a range of partners and external agencies to support service pupils and their families. You make effective use of speech and language services, occupational therapy and your parent support adviser. Partnerships with the local special school are also very good. This has enhanced staff expertise by providing support,

training and outreach work. Well-developed links exist with local pre-schools, including one which serves Royal Navy personnel. This provides your school with useful information on the needs of those families who will be joining you and indicates any additional welfare support that might be necessary.

- The armed forces are celebrated as part of the school's overarching respect for all families. The curriculum is adapted successfully to incorporate and celebrate service life. For example, a Year 1 project provides pupils with opportunities to find out about the history of the Royal Navy and to interview relatives about their role in the services. Indeed, parents appreciate it when service personnel are seen in the school, whether talking to pupils, attending remembrance services, or raising money for the 'Help for Heroes' charity.
- Your virtual learning environment (VLE) is well established and used very successfully to enable pupils to communicate with parents when they are on active service via 'E-Navy Pals'. There are planned opportunities in lessons to use this form of communication as part of a project linking with a parent who is a chef in the Royal Navy. Pupils also have access to this facility during the school day and can access it from home through the VLE. One serving dad said that it was an important way to help him keep in touch with his children and their schooling when away.
- There has been significant investment in the role of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). She works very successfully with pupils and families who need additional support with a range of emotional issues, such as anger management or bereavement. Parents say they have a high regard for this service, even if they haven't accessed it themselves.
- The governing body is actively involved in monitoring outcomes for service pupils. The chair of governors routinely evaluates feedback from parental surveys and the governing body monitors the achievement of different groups effectively. There is a long-held commitment to having service representation on the governing body. Until very recently, a governor has been a serving member in the armed forces but this has been affected by postings. Nevertheless, the voice of service families is still represented by one of the parent governors.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with pupils 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

Christopher Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector