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Miss H Jenkins
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Dear Miss Jenkins

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 27 and 28 September 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for students 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 and/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 you, senior staff, parents, students and representatives from local authority services.

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

- The school has a strong sense of community and it knows its students well. This is used to very good effect to support students from service families including those who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities. Parents from service families spoke very highly of their relationships with the school. In particular, where their children have required additional support, parents find staff very accessible and helpful.

- Although the school does not monitor students from service families as a discrete group, it does have the information it needs to check their individual progress effectively, and uses the information thoroughly as a means of identifying when additional support is needed. The school ensures that support is matched well to individuals' needs.
- Students who are higher attaining are also supported well through the school's provision for those who are gifted and talented. The school's specialism in the performing arts has been important in developing an area of curriculum of particular interest for some of the students from service families. Extended curriculum opportunities, such as sailing on a 'clipper', have also been used to good effect to meet the needs and interests of students. As a result, students from service families of all abilities make good progress overall in both academic studies and personal development.
- Most students from service families transfer from local primary schools. Transition arrangements are good and links with the local parent support adviser have increased the support available to parents when students move between schools. Much of the liaison at transition involves face-to-face meetings with pastoral staff and students. The vast majority of students from service families complete their secondary schooling from Year 7 to 11 when they would normally transfer to other educational providers.
- Currently, no parents are on distant deployment. The school is, however, increasingly aware of families where siblings rather than parents are deployed to front line activities and has successfully organised additional support for a family in such circumstances. Senior managers are alert to the needs of students and any arrangements for additional pastoral support is managed extremely well and monitored by the deputy headteacher who is responsible for pastoral matters.
- There are excellent relationships with local authority agencies, for example the targeted youth worker and the parent support adviser who, in conjunction with the school, have enabled some vulnerable students to engage more effectively with their learning. This work has also included very effective support for families.
- Where it has been required on an individual basis, good links have been made, through local authority support workers and with Ministry of Defence (MOD) family support services in order to help with welfare issues. However, the senior management team is aware that there are other MOD links that may be pertinent, for example linking more formally with other schools, both locally and further afield, that have 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

Daniel Towl
Her Majesty's Inspector