

1 December 2010

Mrs J Chevaugon
Headteacher
Blyth Horton Grange Primary School
Kitty Brewster
Blyth
Northumberland
NE24 4RE

Dear Mrs Chevaugon

Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: school governance

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on the 10 and 11 November 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 Blyth Horton Grange Primary School is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment prior to publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the identification of features of best practice included: meetings with members of the Interim Executive Board (IEB), you, the clerk to the governing body, members of the school leadership team, the school improvement partner (SIP), local authority representatives, parents and pupils; a tour of the school; and the scrutiny of relevant documents.

Features of good practice

- The thorough arrangements and the outcome of the review of the effectiveness of the initial IEB. This resulted in a significantly reduced number of governors with the professional skills, experience and personal qualities needed to take the school forward. The reduced numbers facilitate frequent meetings and thorough monitoring of the school's progress promoting rapid improvement.
- Governors implement rigorous staff recruitment procedures. The appointment of high-quality senior leaders and teachers has meant that children and their parents have confidence in the school.
- You and the governors have established aims for the school and underpinning priorities for improvement that are focused successfully on

improving teaching and learning and ensuring that the school provides high-quality services for the community.

- Governors' extensive availability, and determination and support to achieve the high ambitions that they have set for the school.
- Governors have established excellent communications that have been extremely effective in engaging staff and parents in achieving the school's priorities.
- Governors' and the local authority's excellent support for you in reviewing the curriculum and completely refurbishing the school. Refurbishments provide an enhanced learning experience for the children, both within the classroom and through external play, homework clubs, visits and educational outings. The school accommodation now provides a safe and welcoming learning environment for children and their parents and carers.
- Governors' thorough arrangements for quality assurance and regular self-evaluation. They receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for children, which allow them to provide very high levels of monitoring and challenge. This includes reports from staff at all levels of the school and comprehensive notes of visits from a highly experienced SIP.

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

Yours sincerely

Vivien Shipley
Her Majesty's Inspector