

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



12 November 2010

Mrs K Young
Headteacher
Cove Junior School
Fernhill Road
Cove
Farnborough
GU14 9SA

Dear Mrs Young

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 11 and 12 October 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 and/or disability, and the arrangements to ensure the continuity of provision when children 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 pupils from service families. Discussions were also held with governors and local authority support staff.

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 has a tradition of educating children from service families, although the proportion of pupils from service families has steadily declined. Currently, they represent 4.6% of the pupils on roll and are drawn from families where a parent is serving in the Army.
- Systems are in place, including through the annual school census, to identify service pupils. This information is effectively used to track and monitor the performance of this group of pupils.
- No formal mechanisms are in place to identify pupils who have service members in their extended family; although the school normally identifies this informally through discussion with the family or pupil.
- Strong systems are in place to support pupils as they transfer into the school. This including tracking down missing records and analysing records for additional or special educational needs and/or disabilities. New pupils welcome the 'buddy' system which helps them to make new friends. Parents welcome the high level of informal contact they have with the school during the transition period.
- The quality of records received on pupils transferring varies considerably. Multiple moves and details of a pupil's targets are frequently absent from records. Greater variation is seen in the quality of information when a pupil joins from an overseas school.
- The school has a good awareness of the importance of passing on accurate records promptly to a receiving school.
- Service families' children attain in line with their peers. The school is particularly effective in providing individual support to address gaps in attainment or skills. Parents and pupils acknowledge that the school is good at early identification of additional needs and gaps in core skills.
- Effective care, guidance and support are provided to all pupils; this is underpinned by sound pastoral systems. No formal systems have been established to meet the additional needs of service families' children who have undertaken multiple moves or who are under social or emotional pressures as a result of parental deployment. However, good informal systems have developed to support individual service families' children. For example, teaching assistants are particularly skilled at providing well-targeted support. Pupils are confident that adults are always available to help and advise them. However, they say they would like more information on how a particular deployment might impact on their parent. They would welcome the opportunity to have a 'frank' discussion with an adult prior to, and during, deployment.
- The school has fostered a wide range of partnerships in support of meeting pupils' additional or special needs. In particular, relationship with the local authority support services is good. However, the external support staff that are linked with the school do not have direct experience of supporting service families' children and their families, but can direct them to appropriate specialist services if required. Links with service

organisations including the Army Welfare Service (AWS) are less well developed.

- Pupils express the view that as a member of a service family they are different from many of their peers. In particular, they worry about potential future moves and the impact on their friendships. Pupils also feel under pressure when a parent is deployed abroad and feel additional responsibility for younger siblings.
- The school recognises that often service families' children have particular skills in taking responsibility and caring for other pupils. For this reason, they have been given roles in the school community, such as serving on the school council.
- Governors are keenly interested in the school. However, they do not routinely hold the school to account over the performance of all groups, including that of service children.
- The school has clear systems in place to safeguard pupils' welfare and for child protection. All staff have undertaken appropriate training and understand policies and procedures well. This benefits all children, including those from service families.
- The school is aware of the need to ensure good curriculum continuity for service pupils who transfer into the school. However, this relies heavily on individual class teachers' curriculum planning. There are no systems in place to support pupils who have previously studied a different modern foreign language.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Lowery
Her Majesty's Inspector