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12 November 2010

Mr M Schofield  
Headteacher  
Boston West Primary School  
Sussex Avenue  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE21 7QG

Dear Mr Schofield

**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 during my visit on 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.

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 and the assistant headteacher responsible for assessment, and with parents of service and ex-service families.

Because of the very small numbers of children of service and ex-service families attending the school no judgement is being made of the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel. However, I hope that the following observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with children and their parents who are in families of service personnel.

**Key features**

- Following enquiries prior to the visit, the school established that it has a very small number of pupils from serving service families and an equally very small number are from ex-service families. The school's tracking records suggest that these pupils make varying degrees of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, overall, as a group, they made two sub-levels progress last year, and are on track to reach age-

related national expectations in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

- The few service pupils who have not spent all their schooldays at Boston West joined from other state schools. Transfer records did not indicate they were from service families. Local authority admission forms currently do not require to record whether children are from service backgrounds.
- Although Army service families often move together in large-scale regimental moves, soldiers who leave the Army settle into dispersed communities as individual families and often with no indication of their service background.
- The experience of the small number of service families in Boston West is largely similar to the experience of families in schools where the majority of pupils are from service families. They share the same anxieties and aspirations.
- Securing a good school for their children is a high priority for service and ex-service families. Schools with a good reputation within the community, as the families felt Boston West to have, are often oversubscribed. Service parents spoke with feeling about the distress experienced by children when they were unable to attend the school where their friends were because they had failed to gain admission. Although the families saw a good primary education as critical, all agreed about the need for maximum stability during Key Stage 4 when their children would take their GCSE examinations.
- There was a strongly held view among service and ex-service parents that they did not wish to be seen as different. There was a strong belief in self-sufficiency. However, all accepted that from time-to-time, support may be required and should be available. They feel that schools are well placed to provide unobtrusive support should this be required.
- Service families are familiar with, and have made use of, the main forces' welfare organisations such as the Soldiers, Seamen and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA), the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) and the Royal Air Force Families Federation (RAFFF). No family was familiar with the Children's Education Advice Service (CEAS), although families would only be registering if their child had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Families were unaware of any local authority support they may turn to.
- It was explained by parents how shortcomings in transfer records between schools can affect children who experienced difficulties, for example with their handwriting. If records are not passed on, or not acted on by the next school, pupils continue to have difficulties well into their secondary education.
- Service parents whose partners work away value the provision of extended childcare services beyond the school day, and to facilitate their own work or training for professional qualifications. Addressing such community need seems particularly relevant to the school as it plans for the school's expansion to accommodate growing numbers of pupils.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with children and their parents who are in families of service personnel.

A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority as a record of my visit.

Yours sincerely

**Brian Padgett**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**