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Mr J Gawthorpe
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gawthorpe

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 13 and 14 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, members of staff, and community and service representatives.

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 traditionally accommodates a significant number of service children. Currently 35% of its pupils are from service families who are mostly based at RAF Odiham. However, this figure may be an underestimate as some parents are reluctant to identify themselves as service families. No information is kept on pupils who have members of the services in their extended family.
- On entry to the school, pupils' needs are assessed promptly. Where available, pupils' records are scrutinised and this information is used to immediately inform intervention packages. The school acknowledges that this information is slow to come through, particularly from schools overseas.
- The proportion of service children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those identified as gifted and talented, form a smaller group than that of the non-service children. However, the profile of service children varies across each year group.
- The school uses the information on its service families to rigorously track the progress and monitor the attainment and attendance of service pupils. It then uses its tracking and assessment information to continually tailor its intervention programme and packages of additional support.
- Assessment information identifies that boys at the start of Key Stage 2 from service families have lower literacy skills, in particular in writing, than those pupils from non-service families. Pupils welcome the additional support they receive in tackling gaps in their literacy.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of service pupils is broadly in line with that of their peers.
- Effective support is provided for service pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents complimented the school on its approach to meeting individual pupils' needs and on its flexibility in deploying delegated resources for special educational needs. All parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress.
- The care, guidance and support provided to pupils are strong. Pupils from both service and non-service families acknowledge the assistance they receive from their class teachers. Outstanding support is provided as pupils transfer into and out of the school. Special arrangements are in place to ensure pupils who transfer mid-year are quickly settled in at the school and their studies. Sometimes continuity of study can be an issue for foreign languages, as the language studied by children previously is frequently different to the foreign language taught by this school. Indeed, the school acknowledges that curriculum continuity for service children in all of the foundation subjects presents a challenge.
- The school has established strong links with external agencies to ensure that pupils' additional needs are tackled as promptly as possible. However, some of the local authority services linked to requests for specialist support for service children cannot be immediately dealt with because of the short notice and are therefore slower to come through.

- The school has service representation on the governing body; close links with the service padre and other HIVE personnel, and maintains links with the headteachers' forum which meets quarterly with officers from Odiham. However, the school improvement plan does not include a strategic approach to developing further links with external agencies.
- The local authority's admissions policy recognises the needs of service children. However, a few parents reported that pressure for places in some local schools had presented them with a challenge in securing local school places. The school is aware of this and parents acknowledged the sensitive support and advice they received.
- The school has a good awareness of the social and emotional needs of its pupils, including those from a service background. Some teachers would welcome more training on meeting these needs. Pupils would appreciate the opportunity to meet as a discrete group, in particular during periods when their parents are deployed abroad.
- Communication between the school and parents is regular, both informally and formally, including through the home/school contact book, progress reports and parents evenings. New approaches, using information and communication technology, including texting, emails and the school website are now starting to allow parents who are away from home to get up-to-date information on their children's education.

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