

12 November 2010

Mrs J Farmer
Headteacher
Leconfield Primary School
Arram Road
Leconfield
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HU17 7NP

Dear Mrs Farmer

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 you, staff, the chair of governors, pupils and parents; a review of the school's documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, monitoring data and child protection procedures; and a meeting with the local chair of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Families Association (SSAFA) who is also a member of the Army Welfare Service (AWS).

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

Key features

- The 'can do' attitude of the school and the overwhelming belief that mobility is not an excuse for underperformance underpin the success of the school's engagement with service pupils. Pupils report that in this school there is no such word as 'can't'; all they need is the right help and they can do anything.
- You and the whole staff team are fully committed to the inclusion of service families, who are seen as an asset to the school. Multi-culturalism is actively celebrated, such as Nepalese dancing, and is seen as socially enriching for the school. The very warm welcome that families receive establishes strong relationships with parents and ensures new pupils settle quickly. Parents report that all staff are extremely friendly and approachable and they have every confidence that their children are safe and their children's needs are met.
- The transition of pupils in and out of the school is managed extremely well. Administrative staff quickly chase records for pupils who arrive with little or no information from their previous schools so that teaching staff can plan for pupils' individual learning needs. They also ensure that records of pupils who have left the school are forwarded promptly, contacting the receiving school if these have not been formally acknowledged to check that pupils have arrived.
- Service pupils settle extremely well in the school. Other pupils show them around the school and help them to understand the daily routines and to find their way. Pupils say that someone is always on hand to talk to and that teachers check to ensure that all is well. They report that their work is challenging and that they enjoy their learning. Pupils say that repetition of work is not an issue as their teachers ensure that their work is new and exciting. Those spoken to all reported that they are making good or better progress.
- Outcomes for service pupils are evaluated thoroughly and systematically by the school and indicate that they are responding extremely well to the interventions and support that is in place. As a result, progress for service pupils is as good as that of non-service pupils and attainment is improving.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs assessed swiftly in school, ensuring appropriate, targeted support is very effective. Clear records are maintained and shared with parents who are well informed about their children's progress and contribute to their ongoing assessment. However, delays in formal assessment, as a result of frequent moves and difficulties with arranging meetings with appropriate agencies, causes anxiety for families and frustration for the school, which manages exceptionally well while waiting for decisions regarding entitlement and funding.
- Child protection procedures are thorough and take account of the possible vulnerability of pupils who are highly mobile. All staff are appropriately trained and the designated person for child protection is very clear about her roles and responsibilities. Consequently, pupils who may be vulnerable are safeguarded effectively.

- The school's partnership with parents is extremely strong. Parents report that they feel confident to approach staff to raise concerns or share information about their children. Support has been described by some as 'exceptional' and comments, such as 'this is the best school my child has been to' and 'I know my child is doing well here', are commonplace.
- Parents know that you are understanding and willing to consider absence requests to enable pupils to spend time with a parent returning from overseas deployment, which supports their well-being extremely well. However, such requests are not common and attendance is high.
- While all parents express their utmost appreciation of the school, some feel they have little assistance and can be disadvantaged when initially trying to secure a school place in a new area. Examples include: needing a confirmed address before they can apply; limited choice available as schools may already be full by the time they can apply; and not always being able to visit a school beforehand. All parents said that they had to be proactive in researching schools in a new area but all found this school very supportive and helpful in making the transition as easy as possible.
- Links have been established with the local military base, although these are not as strong as they have been in the past because of postings of some key staff at the base. However, you are proactive in re-establishing those links and the Army Welfare Service is very willing to work in partnership with the school, to provide support with funding for projects such as summer fetes, Christmas parties etc. Arrangements have also been made to translate some key school documentation into Nepalese to help support those families with limited English.
- The school has identified barriers to pupils' well-being and learning and is very flexible and responsive to change; it is eager to adapt to prepare for and meet pupils' needs. Funding is an issue for the school with such high levels of mobility. The local authority does have some emergency funding available and this has been accessed in the past. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the school to access additional funds to support pupils who need some short-term targeted support.

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

Lorraine Rowson-Clark
Her Majesty's Inspector