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Mrs J Finlay
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Finlay

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: a review of anti-bullying practice in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 16 November 2011 as part of our survey of schools' work to create a positive school culture and prevent and tackle bullying.

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.

This letter briefly summarises our discussion at the end of the visit.

Strengths of this aspect of the school's work

- The school motto, 'Working together for individual excellence', recited by pupils and staff, reflects your vision to create a positive learning environment for the benefit of all pupils and staff.
- A strong emphasis is placed on the use of talking strategies to resolve issues which may arise. You have successfully devoted time and effort to talk at length with pupils to communicate that this is the correct manner to deal with unacceptable behaviour. This is shown in the language that pupils use when discussing behaviour and bullying and is reflected in the professional dialogue that staff undertake when discussing strategies to notice and deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Staff know the pupils and their families very well which supports positive relationships and an open approach to including parents and carers in resolving issues of bullying. They share a collective understanding of what action to take to tackle bullying and ensure that pupils feel safe and content. Through modelling appropriate behaviour and allocating time to sort issues out, they present a consistent approach of how to treat each other.

- Comprehensive and easily understood policies for behaviour, anti-bullying and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and citizenship, including amended versions appropriate for the Early Years Foundation Stage, set out the school's values and outline how members of the school community should behave towards each other. Staff roles are included so that they are aware of their responsibilities in dealing with unacceptable behaviour and creating a positive school atmosphere. Actions to be taken by the school if bullying occurs are itemised in the policy and staff and pupils know them. As part of anti-bullying work, the school has very recently reviewed this process which has left a few pupils feeling a little unsure of the exact sanctions for unacceptable behaviour and bullying.
- The majority of pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that if there are any issues then you and the teachers would sort them out quickly and fairly. Pupils recognise that they should respect their teachers and each other and that staff respect them and listen to them. During the visit, pupils used the large outdoor space at breaks and lunchtimes sensibly and happily to play well with each other, many making up their own games, contentedly drawing or colouring and talking about 'special gems' they had brought into school.
- The planned curriculum, through the use of social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and religious education (RE), effectively provides opportunities for pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Assemblies are an integral part of this delivery and are used to introduce and revisit the theme for the unit of work. Pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 study the same unit but have objectives appropriate to their age. Termly plans are translated into weekly plans which identify the learning objective to be taught. SEAL is supplemented with objectives from the RE syllabus and some aspects of tolerance and diversity are covered in other subjects. However, the school is at a transition point in its development of the curriculum as it reviews delivery and moves to a creative curriculum based on the development of key skills across all subjects.
- The introduction of nurture time enables staff and pupils to enjoy social interaction as they explore the SEAL theme for the week. Visits and visitors enhance this aspect of the curriculum, for example the local police constable delivered cyber-bullying training to Years 5 and 6 after the staff noted that pupils were worried about the inappropriate use of social networking sites.
- The school has focused on developing a new Early Years Foundation Stage and has created an environment which is promoting personal development through the use of the large space and resources both indoors and outdoors.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing the school's delivery of PSHE and citizenship to ensure pupils' progression in the development of key skills

- recording more systematically any incidents of bullying and the action taken and checking that this action has been effective
- including PSHE and citizenship in the reviewed system for monitoring and evaluating the delivery and outcomes for all subjects
- ensuring that there is clarity about the sequence of actions to be used in the amended system for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and bullying so that pupils are secure about the process.

I hope that this visit has been useful in the further development of this aspect of the school's work.

As 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

Eileen Mulgrew
Her Majesty's Inspector