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Mrs S Widgery
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Dear Mrs Widgery

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 31 October to look at work in ESD.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with pupils, teachers and other staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observations of two lessons; and an analysis of pupils' work.

The overall effectiveness of ESD was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' standards and achievement in ESD are good.

- Pupils at all ages have a good understanding of sustainability, at an appropriate level, and can discuss a range of related issues and present well-argued opinions. They have a very good understanding of, for example, the need to reduce, re-use and recycle materials. They can relate their understanding of this to what happens in school, in their own homes and in the local community.
- Older pupils have a good understanding of complex issues that require balancing a range of different arguments and evidence, such as those related to the destruction of parts of the rainforest and understanding

that this is complicated when the needs of local people are taken into account.

- Pupils have a very good understanding of choices and consequences, rights and responsibilities, and needs and wants. They can relate this to their own circumstances and to broader contexts.
- The ethos and approach of the school equips pupils well with the key skills and attitudes required to develop their understanding of ESD; for example, decision making and problem solving skills, balancing evidence and opinions, communication and listening skills.
- Through the work that the school does, pupils are involved in the wider community. One very good example is the involvement with the local community garden.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teaching has a very good emphasis on developing the key skills and attitudes that underpin ESD.
- Particularly strong features are the development of all pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence to enable them to take a full part in all activities, the emphasis on discussion and listening and valuing the opinions of others.
- Teaching fully engages all pupils and gives excellent attention to the needs of all individuals. Teachers make skilful and sensitive use of questioning to involve all pupils and to develop teaching points.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support that enhances learning for all pupils, as well as giving good attention to those with particular needs.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good overall.

- Although not explicitly identified as such, the school makes good use of the opportunities presented to deal with ESD issues in key curriculum areas; for example, geography, science, design and technology, and PSHE provide good opportunities for pupils to develop relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. Other curriculum areas also make useful contributions to ESD and the school makes sensible use of a thematic approach for some topics.
- The school makes very good use of local issues to address ESD, such as the closure of the local post office and the development of the local community garden.
- A wide range of other activities make good contributions to ESD; for example, the collaborative work with four other local primary schools on global citizenship, pupils' involvement in developing the school's

travel plan, the annual visit of the Wild Waste bus and work with the Forest Schools initiative.

- The school buildings and grounds do not provide a very good context for work on ESD. However, the buildings and grounds are used to teach pupils about reducing electricity and water consumption, about sustainable use of materials, looking after their own environment, recycling paper and composting food waste.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management are good overall.

- Although there is no explicit leadership of ESD and ESD had not been previously identified as a discrete area of activity in the school, there has been good co-ordination of a range of activities that relate to ESD. Extensive reorganisation and disruption has rightly led the school to focus on core activities to maintain stability and good standards.
- The school recognises the need for better co-ordination of the curriculum, and related activity, to ensure that pupils' experiences are both complementary and ensure progression.
- There is good involvement of pupils in decision making. The School Council has a clearly defined role and the power to make decisions. Several ESD related issues have been discussed, such as the need for more recycling bins in the playground and how to make best use of the school grounds. The 'Wombles' group is an excellent example of how pupils are encouraged to take a lead in the school; their maturity and commitment to their cause is quite outstanding and provides an excellent role model for other pupils as well as a showcase for what the school does so well.
- The school's ethos and philosophy support work in ESD extremely well and ensure that pupils are very well equipped for ESD. The school works hard and successfully to develop the pupils as active citizens. There is excellent involvement with the wider community. International links come naturally to the school, although it recognises the need to do this more formally and has already made progress in this.
- The school is very well placed to further improve provision for ESD.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- One of the key strengths of the school is the manner in which it respects and values the diversity within the school community. The way that the school works as a happy and effective community is very impressive. All are made to feel welcome and valued.
- Every pupil is treated with total respect and their individual needs, within the extremely diverse school community, are given the highest

priority. Diversity is valued and used well to develop pupils' attitudes and understanding its benefits.

- Developing pupils' self-esteem and self-worth underpins much of the work of the school.
- The experienced and good quality team of teaching assistants is deployed extremely effectively.
- All pupils are given the care, support and guidance required to make good progress.
- The care and respect that pupils show for each other is extremely impressive. I was also impressed by how welcome I was made to feel by all of the pupils I met – in lessons and around the school – as well as by all staff.

Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- develop a clear overall framework to co-ordinate the school's approach to ESD and to ensure that pupils' experiences are complementary and lead to progression in their understanding
- establish a set of principles of ESD to inform the school's self-evaluation.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector