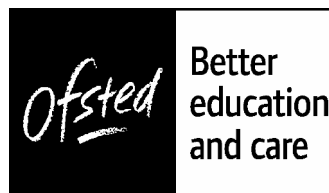


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Mrs J Meyer  
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Dear Mrs Meyer

Ofsted Survey Inspection Programme – The degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement in children and young people's education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 18 October 2006 to look at the degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement in children's education.

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 staff, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of two lessons, a session in the library and a parent interview at parents' evening. The judgements are specifically in relation to the degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement under the following headings.

The overall effectiveness of the degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement in children's education was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards including personal development

The impact of parental and carer involvement on achievement, standards and personal development is satisfactory, although this has yet to impact significantly on standards.

- At Key Stage 1, standards are broadly in line with the national average in all core subjects although an insufficient proportion of pupils achieve the higher levels,

particularly in reading and mathematics. In 2006, standards in all subjects, and particularly in reading, were lower than expected.

- In 2005, results at Key Stage 2 for all core subjects were an improvement on the previous year and in line with the national average, including the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels. In 2006, unvalidated data show that whilst English improved steadily, due to the whole school focus in this area, reading did not improve. The proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in English was lower than anticipated, although the number of pupils achieving higher levels was higher than anticipated. Attainment in mathematics and science attainment declined. Both were significantly below the national average and expected levels were not achieved, including by those pupils expected to reach higher levels in these two subjects.
- Pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress although this varies according to their needs. The progress of other pupils with LDD is not as secure. Pupils do not always achieve the levels of which they are capable. However, the school now has recently started using systems to track pupils' progress more accurately throughout the year and more closely monitors those who are not making expected progress.
- All learners achieve satisfactorily in their personal development. Vulnerable pupils are supported appropriately to achieve as well as they can.
- All pupils benefit when parents are involved around the school or in activities, such as practical maths, developing library skills or cooking. The pupils find these sessions interesting and enjoyable.
- Individual children benefit when parents are involved in helping them at home, for example in hearing them read regularly, and this works most effectively when home and school complete the child's reading record regularly.
- Information for parents in other areas of the curriculum, for example on up-to-date mathematical methodologies, is inconsistent. For Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, parents are not provided with sufficient advice to enable them to fully support their child and make an impact on their progress.
- Parents of pupils in the Foundation Stage are provided with a range of good quality information and flexible induction arrangements, which help younger learners make a positive start to their education. The school has particularly close links with the neighbouring pre-school.
- To date the school has managed to improve on the last two year's attendance levels. Attendance is well managed by the school.

Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

The impact of parent and carer involvement in these areas is satisfactory.

- The school successfully involves parents and other family members, such as grandparents, in the life of the school, with many active volunteers. It now

welcomes more volunteers in the classrooms, which has had a positive impact, with many pupils really enjoying these sessions.

- Pupils are assessed regularly against National Curriculum levels and this is shared with parents, although they are not directly involved in informing assessment and do not fully understand whether the different levels are below, in line with, or above average.
- Parental attendance at meetings is closely monitored and is around 80%. The school takes steps to liaise with parents who find it difficult to attend.
- Parents are invited to meetings early on in the school year to discuss how their child has settled. Targets are not sufficiently discussed at these meetings, nor generally shared with parents or pupils. Most pupils are unaware of their targets, other than their reading targets.
- Most parents are not kept updated on their child's progress and are unclear about the progress their child is making. As there is an "open door" policy at the school, some parents informally request information about this.
- Parents of children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive regular updates and are better informed.
- Regular support is provided to pupils through some teaching assistants and many parent volunteers. The impact of this on achievement and standards is not yet proven.
- Marking in pupils' books is inconsistent and does not generally include pointers for development to help improvement.
- Support for pupils as they move up from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is less effective than entry into and exit out of the school. Staff recognise that this is an area for development.

## Quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Pupils often enjoy their learning and there are opportunities for them to share activities with their parents, for example on outings, at swimming or as voluntary classroom helpers. Teachers now include the involvement of parents in planning and are becoming more specific about briefing helpers on the learning objectives of the session. They utilise parental skills and knowledge wherever possible to provide good quality experiences for pupils.
- There is a good range of extra curricular activities, which are well supported by learners. However, programmes of learning and activities do not take account of the needs and interests of all learners, for example in design, music and art.
- Good practice when pupils enter the school, such as providing information for parents about developing early reading and writing skills, are particularly helpful in engaging parents and enabling them to support their child fully.

- The new curriculum overview sheets are welcomed by parents and therefore parents and pupils are reasonably prepared for the term ahead. However there is a lack of interim information that incorporates greater detail.
- Pupils and parents are well prepared at the end of Year 6 for the transition to secondary education. This has become a strong feature of the school.
- Homework is inconsistent in quantity and quality across the school. Although parents and pupils are provided with a homework timetable, this is not necessarily adhered to and so pupils do not always have the full amount of time to complete it. When homework is sent out, frequently it does not contain sufficient explanation for those parents who want to help their child, and it is not always well matched to pupil needs.

## Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are satisfactory.

- The headteacher, Foundation Stage Co-ordinator and the special educational needs coordinator are committed to promoting parental involvement.
- The school has identified improving parental involvement as a point for development in their self evaluation form. It also features in the school development plan, school improvement targets and performance management targets. This has not yet had time to embed nor impact on raising achievement and standards.
- The school has many successful initiatives for parental involvement. However, it has not evaluated whether any of these initiatives have really made a difference to pupils' learning and progress.
- The school has correctly identified some key areas for development, such as improving information to parents about the curriculum and teaching. It has made a positive start to this by developing an informative and high quality school website, which is frequently used by many parents.
- Parents are sometimes consulted through questionnaires and their ideas are used to make positive changes to the school community.

## Inclusion

The impact of parent and carer involvement on inclusion is satisfactory.

- This is an inclusive school which works hard to identify pupils' needs as soon as possible and meets them by working closely with other professionals and parents to ensure the outcomes for each child are positive. It reviews the progress of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities regularly and makes their current targets clear to parents.

- The school closely monitors any vulnerable pupils in order to protect their well being.
- It provides good suggestions for parents as to how they might best help their child with learning difficulties or disabilities at home and sends out tailored homework for these pupils. Homework is less successful when it has not been carefully chosen and so is not within the child's capabilities, causing frustration for pupil and parents.
- A combination of small group and individual support is provided for many pupils both inside and outside the class. The school is currently analysing the effectiveness of different approaches to supporting pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- raise pupil and parental awareness of individual targets. Keep parents more regularly informed about their child's progress towards these
- ensure that parents of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are given the necessary information to support their child. Develop a whole school homework policy, agreed by parents and adhered to consistently, which ensures that homework provided is always appropriate to pupils' needs
- provide support for parents and pupils as they move between Key Stages across the school. Develop a whole school marking policy ensuring that pupils and parents understand how their child can improve.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop parental involvement even further 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne  
Her Majesty's Inspector