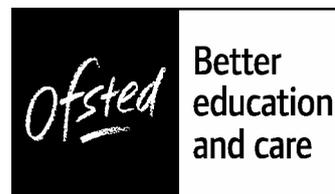


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10 October 2006

Ms C Ryder
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Dear Ms Ryder

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Impact of Extended Services

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 25 September to look at the impact of extended services on children and young people.

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 after school activities.

The overall effectiveness of the extended provision was judged to be good. Some elements of the core offer are at the planning stage, but after school activities and integrated childcare are well established and greatly appreciated by children and families. Out of school learning and good support for transition make a positive contribution to the pupils' personal development, well-being and academic achievement.

Achievement and standards

The school's extended services make a good contribution to pupils' progress and well-being. Achievement and standards are broadly in line with the national average, and improving year on year. From a slightly above average starting point, pupils reached above average attainment on all measures in 2005, doing notably well in mathematics. This was an improvement on the previous year, and there are early indications of further improvement in tests

taken in 2006. Over time, there is no pattern of difference between boys' and girls' progress. Personal development and wellbeing are exceptionally good, and attendance is above average and improving. Pupils are knowledgeable about staying healthy and are being prepared well for their future working lives.

The school has some evidence to link its improving standards and the growth of extended provision. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked by the school, and data suggests that after school learning has boosted individual achievement, particularly in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that both the nurturing Funland Club and the homework clubs have been successful in moving vulnerable pupils forward in their confidence and achievement. Taking part in extra activities helps pupils, including more vulnerable ones, to become confident learners and communicators, with good social skills. Pupils clearly enjoy learning in after school sessions and can articulate the benefits. They see that they reach higher attainments in tests, and have found satisfaction in acquiring new skills and developing interests begun in school, including sewing, singing and softer skills such as team working.

Quality of provision

The overall quality of provision is satisfactory because the school is at an intermediate stage of developing the core extended services offer. New accommodation is planned to help create a Children's Centre. At present there is no breakfast service. However, the school is building on a strong foundation of high quality after school learning, and good partnership with a neighbouring infants school, private childcare and local community groups. Parents have easy access to reliable integrated childcare, and the schools offer nurturing support for vulnerable children from pre-school to transfer to secondary school. Adults make some use of the school's facilities to learn about information technology, and family learning and parenting support courses are on offer.

After school clubs for sports, music, languages and personal development have been shaped by the needs and interests of children and their families. Participation is high. Parents are very positive about the clubs' quality and the value for money, when charges are made. Clubs have opened doors into new interests, opportunities beyond school and recognition for a significant number of young people. A good proportion of pupils use and enjoy the homework clubs, because the teaching assistants who run them offer excellent support and a friendly climate for learning: they overcome pupils' anxieties and frustrations and homework is done well.

Leadership and management of extended services

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors share a clear vision and sense of direction for the extended services and for their continuing development. These are based on good local knowledge and high standards of quality. They have ensured a very positive ethos in the school and built up a team of committed and skilful staff, not least by developing the potential of teaching assistants and giving them delegated responsibility and appropriate training. The staff are clear about how they ensure that their activities contribute effectively to raising achievement, enjoyment and staying safe. The school includes its extended services in its self evaluation. The school surveys parents and pupils about the quality of extended services and unmet needs. However, systems to evaluate more specifically what works are not yet developed.

Planning for the development of integrated services by the cross-agency local leadership group has been consultative, coherent and inclusive of local private and voluntary providers of childcare who make a significant contribution to the integrated offer. For example, a parent-run baby club and childminders in the shared partnership group appreciate improved access to school facilities and resources and good communication with the school. Plans for the development of the full core offer by March 2008 have progressed rapidly and, on the whole, satisfactorily: an extended services management team is expected to manage services which will include health visitor and adult advice drop-in sessions, but the leadership group lacks firm information about how these will come about.

Inclusion

Extended services are aimed at overcoming the barriers to learning which a significant number of pupils face. Pupils who find it hard to settle to work at home or need extra help are clear that the homework clubs make a difference. Vulnerable pupils are well represented in after school activities, because they are invited to join and find the clubs enjoyable and helpful.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- further development of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the extended services and their impact on pupils' achievement, academically and in their personal development
- work with the local authority to secure adequate strategic involvement of partner agencies in planning for the full range of extended services.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop extended services 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

Susan Bowles
Her Majesty's Inspector