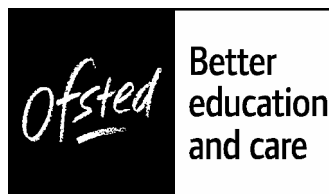


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20 November 2006

Mrs Christine McCrone
Headteacher
Lord Street Community Nursery School
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Dear Mrs McCrone

Ofsted survey – Evaluation of Extended Services in Schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit of 31 October and 01 November 2006 to evaluate the impact of your extended services provision. 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, service providers and governors and by scrutiny of documentation and some observation of pupils' activities.

The overall effectiveness of the extended services in your school was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Extended services have made a very positive impact on achievement and standards.

- Children in the nursery are progressing well because of the school's highly effective teaching, but where children and their families use extended services progress is particularly good. This is evident in gains they make in reading, speaking and personal development as measured by the "Stepping Stones" assessments used nationally for this age range.

- Extended services are also helping children before they enter the nursery. The Family Learning Group and the Family Support Worker's activities, for instance, are helping two and three year olds improve their confidence, concentration, speaking and listening skills and their socialisation with other children. Nursery teachers find them entering their classes with better than expected skills and general competence as learners.
- Extended provision benefits children directly, but further gains come via the impact on parents. The overwhelming majority of parents using any service report that they become better able to understand how their children learn and develop, more positively disposed towards education and more likely to cooperate with the school. They support their children much more effectively as a result.
- Vulnerable children make excellent progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are helped to do so by extended services, for instance, through the Time Out support group, which strongly improves parental confidence and skills in meeting their children's needs. The school successfully encourages parents in greatest need of support to use a wide variety of services including the Family Support Worker and the "Stay and Learn Group" group.

Quality of provision

The quality of the extended services is outstanding.

- The school is already providing the core offer.
- Each of the components is strong. The menu of activities is especially wide and imaginative. Parental support takes many forms, including regular parenting classes and the "Stay and Learn" and "Stay and Play" groups. These take parents into the nursery in the role of trainees, inducting them into its curriculum and child management principles. Parents report enormous benefits in understanding the school's work and their part in their children's development. Referral is very effective because of the high calibre of Family Support Workers based at the school and the efficiency of their liaison with school staff, parents and external services. Community access is strong because courses such as Healthy Living and the PEEPs (Parent Support) groups are well publicised, well attended and frequently lead parents into further activities or links. Child care is provided all year and is of good quality.
- Provision for parents offers effective support. In the Family Learning Groups (PEEPs), for example, there is a very clear emphasis on modelling good parenting and good learning habits rather than instructing. Parents gain confidence in themselves as learners and many have now gone on to gain NVQ and other qualifications and become effective promoters of their children's education.

- Each “Every Child Matters” outcome is promoted very well. Safety is a key focus in all parenting support activity, along with healthy lifestyle. Enjoyment is central to the nursery approach and visibly succeeds. Basic skills, especially literacy and numeracy, are very well reinforced and children show greater confidence in speaking and social interaction after only a short time at the nursery or pre-nursery groups.

Leadership and management of the Extended Services

The leadership and management of Extended Services provision are outstanding.

- The excellent impact on children and their families stems from the vision and efficiency of leadership and management of the extended services. The headteacher plays a key role in setting extremely high expectations and monitoring their implementation. She also demonstrates how strategic thinking can be matched by excellent personal skills in the day-to-day running of extended services. The range and quality of services is first rate and have been established in a relatively short period.
- Delegation is highly effective: day-care, parent support, the toy library and breakfast club, for example, are all run very well by extremely competent individuals who act with considerable independence from the headteacher.
- Liaison is very effective. The headteacher has again set an excellent example of astute decision making and good relationships, which she fosters closely. She has entered into numerous successful numerous partnerships with other providers, such as the Family Support Worker, Sure Start Centre, Barnardos and NACRO. Duplication is avoided and the services build on the strengths of different providers.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is very good.

- Provision is shaped by the needs of the most vulnerable children and families.
- Benefits from services are seen to be particularly strong in these groups.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make particularly good progress because of extended services.

Areas for improvement

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

- ensure that the newly designed assessment system allows staff to analyse the successes and needs of different pupil groups at the earliest possible stage.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your Extended Services.

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

Robert Drew
Additional Inspector