

20 November 2006

Mr Alan Dewhurst
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Chesterfield Road
Matlock
DE4 3FT

Dear Mr Dewhurst

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 01 and 02 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, pupils, parents, service providers, a governor; scrutiny of documentation; observation of visits by providers and observation of pupils' activities.

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

Achievement and standards

Extended services are making a satisfactory impact on achievement and standards.

- The impact on academic standards is hard to judge because much of the school's extended services is new. Nor are the school's assessment arrangements yet able to identify improvements linked to extended services.
- However, a good impact is discernible in pupils' personal development, especially their socialisation, health and enjoyment of school. A major contributory factor is the 90 per cent take-up of lunch-time sports by pupils. For a significant minority, this is further helped by participation in high quality

before and after school clubs. Staff find pupils increasingly positive and alert in afternoon sessions and more able to work with peers following an active lunch time.

- Standards in physical education, already high before extended services were introduced, are rising further. All pupils benefit, but those less naturally gifted at sport are showing far better skills, fitness levels and interest than might be expected.
- The nursery, providing a full day of education and childcare in term time only, is a major component of extended services and has a positive impact on the standards of children who attend. Children transferring to this school's reception class show marked benefits in their confidence, basic skills and learning habits.

Quality of provision

The quality of the extended services is satisfactory.

- The school rightly acknowledges that its provision does not yet match the "core offer", especially in terms of community access, parenting support and scope for swift and easy referral to providers of specialist services.
- It has a narrower than usual menu of extended activities, but contains within this some very successful areas.
- Lunchtime sports provision, for instance, is exceptional. Nearly the whole school is involved in voluntary, organised sporting activities throughout the week. Participation is very enthusiastic and inclusive. Skipping, cross country, netball, football, athletics, tennis and cricket are amongst the activities on offer. These help able pupils enjoy remarkable success in local competitions; they have also opened up sport for many pupils who do not consider themselves talented, but who enjoy participation. Health and fitness across the school are strengths and teachers find pupils visibly more attentive in afternoon lessons if they have participated in lunch-time activities.
- Compared with good practice in schools generally, provision offers less in terms of pre-school activity, music and art activities and regular clubs. The gardening club is a popular exception, but most clubs are occasional rather than regular.
- The current Early Learning Club provides well for a limited number of pupils. They settle quickly into the school day and enjoy their activities and so start on a positive note. However, many other parents and their children wait close by and do not participate.
- The provision for before-and after-school care does not yet extend to full-time care during school holidays.

Leadership and management of the Extended Services

The leadership and management of Extended Services provision are satisfactory.

- The range of provision and its impact on pupils is satisfactory.
- Current provision is well organised. The sudden and unexpected loss of the nursery's previous accommodation took up much of the school's energies during the last year. Plans for expansion of extended services were delayed as a result. However, the headteacher and governors have shown a good capacity to make rapid decisions and take urgent action over this matter and wherever they have found services to be failing in quality.
- Partnership with other providers is less well developed than usual.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good.

- Provision, though strongly sports-focussed, attracts approximately 95 per cent of the school's pupils. Participation by less able and "at risk" pupils is good so that the most vulnerable children and their families benefit significantly, as do the most advantaged children.
- Assessment arrangements do not allow the school to analyse the benefits of its extended services to particular groups of pupils.

Areas for improvement

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

- broaden the range of additional activities, especially non-sports based ones
- strengthen arrangements for parental support and referral
- develop greater community access to the school during and beyond school hours
- seek local partnerships with other providers to assist in the areas above
- develop an assessment system that analyses the impact of extended services on pupils' academic and personal progress.

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