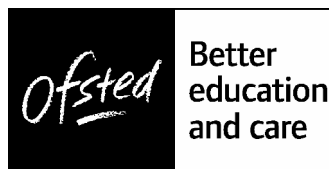


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15 February 2007

Mr Ross Macdonald
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Macdonald

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, parents and pupils, during my visit on 6 February 2007 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, and scrutiny of relevant documentation. 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 good.

Achievement and standards including personal development

The impact of parental and carer involvement on achievement, standards and personal development is good.

- Pupils make good progress. There are high expectations for pupils, some of whom go on to successfully take GCSE and A level to a high standard in art, and in other subjects, where appropriate.
- The strong support of parents and their high opinion of the school leads to a high retention in the sixth form which enables pupils to take further external examinations.
- Attendance is close to the national average for all schools.
- The rate of fixed term exclusions has been falling dramatically since 2003 and there have been no permanent exclusions in two years.
- Parents have a high awareness of the school's policy and procedures on behaviour and are supportive of the school which has successfully reduced the level of inappropriate language spoken by pupils.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties have been successfully engaged in a gardening club which parents have supported.
- The Friends of Meadow High contribute to personal development through organising social events such as discos for the children which they thoroughly enjoy.
- For pupils with medical needs, parents have accompanied them on trips to enable them to participate in events.
- Parents have written information available on options and have a meeting to hear about arrangements but do not always get to hear from subject specialists.

Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

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

- A range of information is available to parents to support their children through the school website, newsletters and specific leaflets on supporting children at home. Information on the website is not widely read however.
- Where parents have acquired specific skills and knowledge in particular syndromes the school draws on their expertise, for example a talk on autism by a parent for parents and staff.
- Parents have contributed to pupils' learning in food workshops at Easter and Christmas and have participated on trips abroad.
- Pupils report that parents are very supportive in their homework "without giving us the answers".
- The school's plans to share pupils' assessment information on the web will be a powerful tool for parents to use to support their children's learning.
- Parents have a detailed knowledge of their children's progress, reading levels and National Curriculum levels.
- The school's extensive support for pupils' academic, social and physical needs is outstanding and ensures close working partnerships with parents. The school knows its pupils and parents very well and is able to plan to meet individual needs.
- The school is successful in involving parents in its reward activities.

- Parents do not feel fully equipped to support their children in reading at home.

Quality of the curriculum

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- Parents have contributed to the curriculum through fund raising (Friends of Meadow) for resources in technology, history and French.
- Parents have supported extra curricular activities such as Saturday morning food workshops and accompanied their children on trips.
- Pupils follow individualised courses of study which have been tailor made for them.
- Parents are regularly updated on curriculum issues through newsletters.
- Curriculum evenings are held regularly for parents; a meeting on work experience for parents was attended by older pupils speaking of their experience.

Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are good.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher in partnership with all staff have worked successfully to establish a whole school ethos which ensures there is a welcoming atmosphere for parents. There is an "open door" approach although no policy in place.
- The leadership team has a strong commitment to supporting parents and careers and is successful in meeting individual needs.
- Parents play a strategic role through their significant contribution to the governing body.
- Arrangements for transition from primary to secondary are especially strong with work starting as early as Year 5.
- Parents are well represented on the governing body and serve in key positions chairing committees.
- Parents are regularly consulted and the school acts upon the responses it receives. It has a very good knowledge of the views of parents.
- The school communicates well with parents through newsletters, leaflets the website but has no check on how widely read or acted upon the information received.
- The pupils' link book is an effective way of communicating between home and school and is highly valued by pupils and parents.
- The school has established key non teaching posts to provide support for pupils and establish closer links with parents.
- Training workshops are under developed and there is no place for parents to meet, although plans are in place to address these issues.

Inclusion

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

- The school identifies pupils as individuals and works successfully to meet their individual academic and social needs.
- Pupils who were at risk from disengaging from learning are successfully integrated into the classroom and many go on to receive recognised qualifications.
- The school is successful in involving parents with their children's learning by effective communication and consultation.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- closer monitoring of parents who do not attend annual review meetings to establish trends and reasons for non attendance
- ensure parents receive opportunities for training to back up the guidance and information they receive.

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

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector