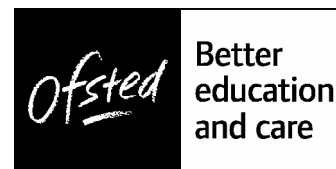


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13 February 2007

Mrs S Hammond
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Dear Mrs Hammond

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Impact of extended services on children and young people and their families

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during our visit on 24 and 25 January to look at the impact of extended services on children and young people and their families.

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. You will note that we have sought to report judgements in respect of the school and, where evidence is sufficient, in respect of the local delivery group, Billericay Education Community (BEC). 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, young people, partner agencies, governors and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The overall effectiveness of the extended provision was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement are good and extended services are having a positive impact on learners.

- Revision and learning support options are available to the full range of student ability, particularly at Key Stage 4. These initiatives have supported improved GCSE results in 2006 and have helped create a firmer foundation upon which improvement can be sustained.
- Good attention is given to the learning needs of the more disengaged pupils, of looked after children and those for whom English is an

additional language. Sixth form students are active in supporting younger less able students through one to one sessions in literacy and a social activities club. These constructive activities, provided in a relaxed environment, are mutually beneficial.

- Overall the school encourages a very positive attitude to learning amongst its students. Students look to it as a social and recreational as well as educational centre and readily engage with the variety of clubs, study support and subject workshops.
- There are good indicators that the school and BEC are able to contribute well to young people achieving Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. For example, procedures are in place to ensure that the many external users adopt safe practices, the extensive sport programme makes a good contribution to young people's health and the good take-up by students of extra curricular opportunities is a positive indicator in terms of enjoying and achieving.
- Opportunities for family and parent learning are increasing and the work is well-conceived, particularly information and communication technology (ICT) workshops where students teach learners from the wider community. Whilst BEC and the school have been receptive to family learning developments there is scope for improved co-ordination and co-operation among providers.

Quality of provision

The quality of extended provision is good.

- There has been progress in establishing an interagency panel known as 'team around the child', (TAC). It is essentially preventive and the impetus provided to the panel by primary and secondary schools is strength. The group has made progress but is still at any early stage. It needs to consolidate formal links with, for example, social services in order to better understand joint expectations.
- Transition arrangements are eased by the school induction programme and the visits of primary children to the school, their use of the secondary school resources and the focused summer activity programmes that are available.
- The school sport coordinator project spans both curricular and extracurricular activity and has provided in-service support for primary staff, specific activities for primary children at the school and an increasing range of sporting events. Collectively these have been successful in generating more positive attitudes towards sport and better performance by children when entering secondary education.
- More widely, the sports centre, managed through the governing body, is extensively used but sporting options for disabled users are lacking.
- The Billericay school library (resource based learning centre) has carved a particular niche in respect of the extended curriculum. A book club and reading events are popular and local primary schools make good use of the facility. The librarian has oversight of e-learning which aids the study support programme. Connexions guidance is available

through this resource which, overall, makes a very good contribution to the life of the school.

- Existing provision and future developments are restricted by the present buildings. Assembly hall and canteen facilities are poor and the general layout of the building limits what can be provided to students, users and the wider community.

Leadership and management of extended services

Leadership and management of extended services across the local delivery group (LDG) and school are good.

- BEC works well and builds on established relationships amongst constituent schools. Its relatively small size appears to be one of the factors in its success. Capacity for further improvement is good.
- BEC has been successful in interpreting the higher level aims set for it by the children and young people's strategic partnership. The county strategy has, thus far, provided sufficient direction and has been a logical starting point. Progress within BEC has been such that it is well placed to take forward more bespoke local objective setting.
- A relatively well informed self assessment of extended services has been produced but it is overly descriptive. Some documentation however does report on impact more effectively and managers are increasingly critical in their analysis.
- The school has recently gained the Quality in Study Support (QUIS) award which has aided its analysis of study support activity.
- Arrangements to consult with and involve parents in their children's education are good but wider community consultation is weaker.
- The extended schools coordinator, operating across BEC, has increased the prominence of extended services and applies a judicious balance of strategic direction and advice to schools. She has succeeded in attracting extra resources to expand the programme. The coordinator's capacity is limited by virtue of her term-time only contract.
- In respect of Billericay school, the headteacher and senior managers have been effective in their support for extended provision. The Governing Body is receptive to new ideas and adopts a highly inclusive approach. In light of the good progress evident and the increasing complexity of relationships, insufficient consideration is being given to longer term sustainability.

Inclusion

- Inclusion is good. Good attention is given to the needs of the vulnerable groups and examples exist where individualised support to, for instance, looked after children has bolstered their educational prospects. Billericay school has a long standing link with the local churches which, in turn, contribute to and are supportive of extended services. A rapidly expanding Sunday Muslim school meets in the premises and attracts Muslim children and families from a considerable

distance. There is scope for more sporting provision for disabled users.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- planning for longer term sustainability
- community needs analysis
- measures to evaluate impact on students and on wider users.

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

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector