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Mrs Patricia Stoker
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Dear Mrs Stoker

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 my visit on 25 January 2007 to look at the impact of extended services on children and young people and their families.

The visit provided much 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, governors and some of the school's partners; observation of family numeracy and an after school club; and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The overall effectiveness of the extended provision was judged to be good. It has the potential to be outstanding.

The extensive extended provision has been developed by the school and its partners, over many years, to provide support, care and guidance for pupils, their families and the wider community in an area that suffers high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

Achievement and standards

The impact of extended services on pupils' achievement and the standards is good.

- Many of the pupils face significant barriers to learning and an important aim of the extended services is to help them overcome these barriers.
- Although the school is confident that its extended services have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, and many of them are likely to do so, it has not measured this systematically.
- Pupils make good progress from a starting point which, for many, is well below average. Where there is any underachievement, the school is aware of the reasons for it, which are often disruption in a pupils' life.
- In Key Stage 1, standards are below average but beginning to improve. In the 2006 tests standards rose in reading and mathematics and a number of pupils reached a higher than average standard for their age. This was a significant improvement on the 2005 results.
- The fall in standards seen in the results of the 2006 Key Stage 2 tests was expected because many pupils in the year group had significant difficulties which affected their learning. Despite these, nearly all the pupils reached the standards predicted from their earlier results.
- The extended services have a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. For example, pupils say how much they appreciate the many opportunities to participate in worthwhile activities out of school and how this helps them learn to get on in a group. The high profile given to the importance of attendance has led to improvement and the rate of attendance is now close to the national average.

Quality of provision

The quality of extended provision is good.

- The school works in close co-operation with many partners in this disadvantaged community to provide a very wide range of extended services for pupils and to support parents and carers in accessing provision from other agencies. It also hosts a youth club and some community activities. All of these services are greatly valued by participants and have a very positive impact on the lives of many.
- The provision fully meets the core offer and the school is well-placed to extend this, particularly community use of the school's facilities.
- There is a good range of out of school activities and care for pupils, including several clubs, such as dance and 'funky fit', which promote healthy exercise. These activities are enjoyed by pupils, many of who attend several.
- The support for vulnerable pupils is a particular strength which has a very good effect on the pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- The school has run many courses for parents over the years, for instance 'cooking on a budget' and courses in basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Parents in a family learning session about how their children are taught mathematics were very enthusiastic and keen to learn;

several had attended other courses and “come back for more”, because “it’s great”. Parents value the opportunity to make friends in the community through such courses.

- High quality support to help develop parenting skills is highly valued by parents and carers who can discuss the strategies they have learned.

Leadership and management of extended services

The extended services are led and managed well.

- The development of the school’s extended services shows the forward looking vision of senior staff.
- The school has developed very positive links with its partners which support coherent provision.
- There is a clear rationale which links the extended services to the school’s determination to enhance pupils’ academic achievement. Work with families and engagement with the community are focused on improving pupils’ personal, social and emotional development as the foundation for achievement.
- The school has been particularly successful at tapping into the talent in the community and developing skills. This is evident, for example in the way it has grown its own support staff, by supporting parents in gaining qualifications.
- The arrangements for management of extended services and the oversight of them by the governing body are clear. Appropriate roles and responsibilities for management and governance when services are co-located have been drawn up with support from the local authority.
- The school is well-placed to improve the effectiveness of its extended services further, when it moves to the new building and benefits from co-located services.

Inclusion

The school has an outstanding commitment to overcoming barriers to learning and supporting pupils, parents and carers and the local community. This is reflected in the extended provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s extended provision
- integrating the planning for extended provision and the school’s improvement plan during the move to the new site and co-located 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

Pat Kime
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools