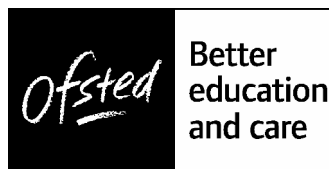


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



01 February 2007

Mrs Peta Collicott
Headteacher
Hermitage Primary School
Hermitage
Thatcham
Berkshire
RG18 9SA

Dear Mrs Collicott

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 16 January 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.

- All groups of pupils in the school make good progress. Parents play a full part at home and in school in ensuring that their children enjoy their education and achieve well.

- The school is particularly successful in meeting the needs of able, gifted and talented pupils and involving parents in pupils' individual programmes. The school has been recognised for its work by receiving the Challenge award.
- The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are met well; parents have a weekly opportunity to meet the Special Educational Needs coordinator if they wish. Parents of these children commented how involved they had been and how their children had progressed well as a result of appropriate intervention.
- Parents' involvement in clubs and activities contributes to pupils' engagement and enjoyment and boosts their confidence (for example, the impact of the garden project on achievement in science).
- The school successfully involves parents to promote the personal development and well-being of pupils. Consequently levels of attendance are very good and behaviour of pupils is of a high standard.
- Pupils' healthy lifestyles are developed through parents using their skills and expertise to lead netball, hockey and rugby activities.
- Parental involvement in mathematics workshops has contributed to pupils' economic well being.
- Induction arrangements are very good. The school has been awarded a "Kitemark" for its provision in the Foundation Stage. The local authority advisor commented on the strong links with parents, the well managed programme of home visits and the parental contribution to the Foundation Stage Profile. Parents contribute regularly to their children's learning diaries.
- In questionnaires all parents who responded said their children enjoy school and make good progress.

Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

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

- The assessment for learning workshop was successful in raising parents' awareness; this has not been repeated but there are plans for another session in 2007 which will involve targets.
- The home school agreement between parents, pupils and the school is an effective initiative to engage parents in their children's learning. No one in the school has overall responsibility for this as it is managed across three age groups.
- Parents can access information about the school from its website.
- Parents are actively involved when pupils have a targeted improvement plan or individual education plan and contribute to the learning of younger children through the Foundation Stage profile.
- Parents have been kept fully informed through the governors' annual report to parents.

- Parents provide support in class either on a regular basis supporting pupils in the classroom for example, (hearing children read) or at special events such as arts week when their talents are fully employed.
- Parents receive feedback through regular parents' meetings and reports which detail their children's attainment and targets for the future. Outcomes of these targets are shared at following parents' meetings.
- Parents support their children at home by helping them with their homework, providing the necessary resources, ensuring it is completed and giving them a range of experiences through trips and membership of organisations.

Quality of the curriculum

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

- Parents contribute significantly by providing lifts on school trips; they take the lead on extra curricular activities (sports, garden club, arts week, and magazine club). They have provided curriculum resources and ensured maximum attendance at a geography residential field trip.
- As a result of parental involvement there is a higher take up of sporting clubs such as netball.
- Parents also contribute to supporting the 'caterpillar club' held after school.
- Parents also contribute their skills as school nurse and librarian.
- The active parent teacher association generates considerable funds for the school to support the curriculum.

Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are good.

- The headteacher and senior members of staff have a clear commitment to involving parents and carers in the education of the pupils which is seen in the welcoming ethos and very positive feedback from parents. This is especially so in the induction arrangements for new parents.
- Leaders ensure that parents are involved in every aspect of school life and are confident in giving parents significant responsibility in leading activities.
- The school consults with parents on a regular basis and always responds to and follow up any of the few concerns that are expressed. Feedback of questionnaire outcomes is regularly given through newsletters. Parental concerns are discussed at governing body and staff meetings. Parents particularly praised the presence of the headteacher and members of staff at the gate "in all weathers" at the start and end of the school day.
- Parent governors provide both support and challenge to the school. They are well informed and use this information to make collective decisions in the interest of the school.

- Staff and parents spoke highly of the school's open-door policy. Whilst there is an open-door ethos in the school which is much appreciated by parents there is no parental policy in place or named person with overall responsibility for parental links.
- The school has very recently completed a self evaluation on parental links which clearly sets out the schools strengths and areas for development.
- There are no formal procedures in place for evaluating the impact of parental involvement.
- Communication and consultation with parents is very good.

Inclusion

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

- All pupils in the school achieve well and parents play a significant part in contributing to the individual learning plans for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented.
- The extensive range of extra curricular activities involves many more pupils in additional sports such as netball.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing a policy through a named person taking responsibility for this aspect
- monitoring the impact of the contribution of parents to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

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