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Ms Ann Potter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Potter

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 17 January 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. All groups make at least satisfactory progress. Staff work closely with parents of pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure they do as well as they can. Much improved results at Key

Stage 3 last year followed a good programme that informed parents about ways to help their children do better and provided good access to test preparation materials on the school's website. The headteacher meets with parents of pupils who are at risk of underachieving in Year 11 and the school supports their progress, enabling many of them to meet their targets.

- The school monitors behaviour well. It sends letters home as soon as there are concerns and works closely with parents on sanctions to help pupils who are having difficulty in improving. It runs successful projects to improve the behaviour and achievement of vulnerable pupils, including Black boys at risk of underachieving, and keeps parents well informed about them.
- The attendance officer, who was previously a local policeman, works well with parents to improve attendance.
- There are good induction arrangements which enable parents to meet staff, see the school and find out about it. They are informed about a good residential trip at the start of Year 7 which helps pupils get to know each other, although not all pupils take part. Arrangements for Year 6 pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly good, enabling parents to discuss their children in detail during visits to the school and at meetings.
- Parents are sent an informative calendar and standard letters about activities each half term, but sometimes they receive too little advance notice.

#### Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

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

- The school tailors well its support for pupils and its links with parents to meet differing needs.
- Parents are well-informed about their children's achievement through well-attended parents' evenings where they meet subject teachers. There are also two target setting and review days each year which are less well attended. The record sheets provided at the reviews that give information about attainment and target levels do not convey clearly how well pupils are making progress. The three main targets set on the day capture important areas for the pupil's development over the next six months but the school has noted that too many of them are soon forgotten. The school has proposals for involving parents more effectively in the target setting process.
- Annual written reports provide useful details about pupils' achievements. They are accompanied by descriptions of National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades in each subject that help pupils and parents know how well pupils are doing.

#### Quality of the curriculum

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

- Parents find the information and meeting on options for GCSE courses helpful.
- The 'families evening' at the start of each year provides information on what pupils will be doing in the coming year. Its new more interactive format in Year 7 has been found helpful, but attendance is low for other year groups.
- Following discussion with parents of Year 10 pupils, the school is currently producing a coursework guide. It recognises that parents would welcome frequent written information about what is due to be taught.
- Specialist technology college status has enabled the school to develop its website and to provide revision materials that pupils and parents may access.
- Parents are kept well informed about visits and residential trips. Some offer placements for work experience.

### Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are good.

- The school shows a strong commitment to parental involvement in its planning and in its approach to improvement. It is a reflective school that tries out new ideas and adapts them, drawing on parents' views to help the development. Its plans convey its commitment to involve parents more effectively in pupils' targets. However, they concentrate on actions to improve communication and so miss opportunities to identify ways of enhancing the impact of parental involvement on pupils' progress and personal development. The school recognises that it would benefit from a more systematic collection of parents' views and has plans underway for this, including use of on-line questionnaires.
- A thorough evaluation of the efficiency of communication with parents has led to improved central procedures. The knowledgeable and welcoming reception staff provide a friendly and helpful service for parents that extends well beyond the school day.
- Parents on the governing body reflect the main ethnic groups in the school.
- The Friends of Addey and Stanhope School are effectively involving an increasing number of parents in school activities.

### Inclusion

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

- The school works well with parents to meet pupils' individual needs.
- It makes good efforts to involve parents who are hard to reach in their children's progress and personal development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- focus planning for parental involvement more closely on its impact on pupils' progress and personal development
- use parents' views more systematically to inform improvements
- enhance parents' involvement in setting targets and supporting progress
- provide more timely curricular and date information to help parents plan ahead.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop parental involvement further in conjunction with raising attainment and improving outcomes for children.

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

Gill Close  
Her Majesty's Inspector