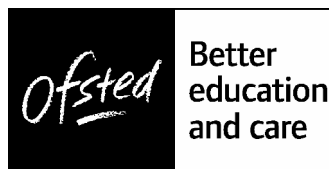


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



05 February 2007

Mrs Penny Thompson
Headteacher
Cookham Dean Church of England Primary School
Bigfrith Lane
Cookham Dean
Maidenhead
Slough
SL6 9PH

Dear Mrs Thompson

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 2007, Usha Sahni HMI, 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.

- This is a high attaining school where pupils join Key Stage 1 working at levels above the expected level and leave at the end of Key Stage 2 at well above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress during their time in the school.
- In last year's Key Stage 2 tests pupils did not do as well in their writing, with fewer reaching the highest levels.
- Parents contribute well to raising pupils' standards and achievement through support in the classroom and at home although there is scope for more strategically targeted support in reading and writing.
- Communication with parents contributes to their children's self-confidence; pupils respond well when they see parents and the school working closely together. One parent said: "It enhances children's involvement if they know their parents are involved in their learning".
- The range of activities at home and school, for example the environment club, provide opportunities for parents to make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- The activities on offer enable pupils to realise their talents and skills which they utilise to develop their responsibility towards the wider local community.
- The high standards of behaviour and levels of attendance are illustrations of the positive impact of close parental links with the school on pupils' personal development.
- There is more to do to promote pupils' cultural development further.

Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

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

- There is an open and welcoming ethos in the school which encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning at home and at school.
- Parents are provided with written guidance on how to support their children. They help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed on time.
- Relationships are good between teachers, parents and pupils; teachers welcome the additional support from parents in the classroom and find it beneficial for the pupils.
- Although some parents provide support in the lessons on a regular basis, this is insufficiently structured and targeted.

Quality of the curriculum

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

- The outstanding contribution of parents enriches pupils' experience of a broad curriculum and develops their individual interests, talents and skills.
- Parental involvement enables pupils to learn from skilled, and sometimes, 'specialist' adults other than teachers.
- A broad range of extra curricular activities is made possible by the parents' contribution which is highly valued by teachers and pupils.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of trips, clubs and sporting activities.
- The Parent Teacher Association has a significant impact on the school's capacity to organise and implement a broad and balanced curriculum through its fund raising activities that pay for resources and enrichment opportunities.
- Voluntary parental contributions pay for additional teaching staff costs which enables Key Stage 2 children to be taught in year groups for the core subjects.

Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are good.

- The headteacher and other leaders in the school have a strong commitment to involving and working closely with parents.
- The leadership and management have successfully established positive relationships with parents by engaging with them at every opportunity.
- Good levels of communication are highly appreciated by parents.
- The school regularly seeks out parents' views on a wide range of issues and takes them into account when making decisions.
- The extensive range of contributions of parents is not sufficiently strategically targeted or evaluated to assess its impact on standards and achievement.

Inclusion

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

- The headteacher attaches high value to the views of parents and ensures that their views are regularly sought and responded to.
- Parents feel included and welcome the opportunity to participate in school and express their views.
- As a result of the additional parental involvement the school is able to contribute to the wider community in the church and the village.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing a more structured approach to the involvement of parents in the classroom targeted on identified school priorities, for example, reading and writing

- evaluating the impact of parental involvement on pupils' standards 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