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Mr John Ayres
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Dear Mr Ayres

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 the 17 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; scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of parents reading with children or assisting activities. 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 outstanding.

Achievement and standards including personal development

The impact of parental and carer involvement on achievement, standards and personal development is outstanding.

- All pupils, regardless of their age, learning difficulty and disability, ethnicity or gender, achieve very well in relation to their individual education targets.

- Questionnaires clearly show that there is a high degree of parental satisfaction. All parents who responded to the most recent questionnaire felt that the school is a welcoming place for parents/carers.
- The very high quality induction arrangements ensure that pupils settle into school quickly. The pre-school group for parents enables families to become acquainted with their children's probable placement. Parents feel that the home visits prior to their children starting school help to make the admission process go smoothly. Progress meetings held six weeks after each child joins the school ensure that any problems are picked up quickly.
- The school works extremely effectively with parents to promote the personal development of the pupils. Behaviour plans are signed by all parents.
- The school has very effective arrangements for preparing the pupils for their next stage of education. The smooth transition to secondary school is very highly regarded by parents.

Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

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

- All parents who responded to the most recent questionnaire felt that they were 'kept well-informed about how my child is getting on'. 96% of the parents agreed that teaching at the school is good. No parents disagreed.
- Annual reviews are held for each child and in 2006 93% of parents attended their child's review. Prior to the review, parents are sent an Annual Review Report detailing progress across all areas of development. They are also sent a questionnaire which asks them to note down any concerns they have or ideas for ways in which the school and parents can work together better. The parental questionnaire then forms part of the Annual Review meeting.
- Records of Achievement are kept for every child in the school. These provide a record and celebration of children's work and are sent home regularly.
- End of year reports are sent home towards the end of each academic year. These include P scale scores and an evaluative comment for every National Curriculum subject area. Parents are invited to submit a written comment in response to the Report.
- Parental response to teaching and learning initiatives is sought. For example, a questionnaire was recently sent to all parents about physical education across the school. This has led to an improvement in the planning and teaching of PE.
- Parents particularly value the very good quality guidance and support provided by the school. This includes medical advice and help with parenting skills through workshops and individual meetings in the home.
- The ability to provide 'respite care' by staff known to the parents is extremely effective, ensuring that their children can be confidently left with an individual

who fully understands the specific needs. However, there is no provision for the Easter and summer school holidays.

Quality of the curriculum

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

- The Governing Body Curriculum Committee is chaired by a Parent Governor. This committee meets half-termly to evaluate all aspects of curriculum development in school.
- The school employs its own music and drama therapists who provide termly support and guidance for parents in their own homes on the emotional development of their children.
- The curriculum responds very positively to the increasing diversity of its pupils. Very successful international fun days are held and parents contribute to celebrations by providing clothing, sweets and specialist cookery sessions.

Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are outstanding.

- There is an excellent commitment to involving parents and carers in the education of the pupils. This is shared among the four teams that form the structure of the leadership and management of the school. It is the specific brief of the Extended Learning team to involve and engage parents. A questionnaire has gathered the particular support and training needs of the parents. As a response to this an occupational therapy workshop was organised and took place in December 2006.
- Parent governors are linked to the four teams and receive regular updates from the senior leadership team. There is a very active and effective parent teacher association that provides an important support network for parents through social and cultural events. This also provides the parents with opportunities to be involved in fund-raising which is a means of significant empowerment for them.
- The headteacher is a facilitator for a nationally recognised leadership programme which includes a significant level of parental involvement.
- There is a very extensive range of management systems in place that engage and involve the parents. These include the use of home/school diaries, dictaphones, signs and symbols for communication, regular newsletters, website, termly parents evenings, workshops and home/school agreements.

Inclusion

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

- The school has an Ethnic Minorities and Traveller children co-ordinator (EMAT) who works with families to provide a range of support.
- There are specialist teaching and support staff who respond to requests for parental involvement and support. There is also a home tuition service that supports families of children that are too ill to attend school.
- The strong links with the mainstream schools are closely monitored and linked to pupil targets. These are evaluated with parents in the child's end of year report.
- The impact of parental involvement inclusive practice contributed to the school recently being awarded the Inclusion Mark.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- working within the Extended Schools Programme to provide holiday placements during the Easter and summer breaks.

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

Lorna Brackstone
Additional Inspector