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Mrs M Binns
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Binns

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 March to look at work in ESD.

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, pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, observation of three lessons, an assembly and a survey of the school environment.

The overall effectiveness of ESD was judged to be good with some outstanding features.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are satisfactory overall.

- Evidence from written work in expected areas indicates that standards in expected curriculum areas are broadly below average. Achievement is inconsistent. For example, opportunities are not always taken to help pupils see the link between local and global environmental issues.
- Pupils throughout the school have a lively interest in and good understanding of the ecological features of the school buildings and environment. They are keen to demonstrate their pride in these aspects of their school by showing them to visitors and talk about them with real

enthusiasm, for example the "green roof" and the collection and use of rainwater. They have a sound understanding of and commitment to recycling and the reuse of waste materials.

- Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The sustainability agenda is reflected very well in the school's attempts to make a reality of its mission to "shape young minds today...for tomorrows world". It is being used effectively to improve pupils' self esteem, confidence and attitudes to learning. This is leading, consequently, to improvements in the achievement of pupils, the vast majority of whom live in areas characterised by high levels of social and economic deprivation. Pupils are getting used to and enjoying taking responsibility on behalf of others, for example as members of the school council but are not yet taking the initiative for themselves.

Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

Teaching and learning are good overall.

- The school's educational philosophy very strongly reflects the principles of ESD. This was evident in all the lessons seen in science, literacy and ICT.
- A strong emphasis on basic skill development is helping pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school.
- Pupils are actively involved in the process of evaluating their progress towards meeting the lesson objectives.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Extra-curricular and enrichment provision for ESD is good. For example, through opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility for enhancing the school grounds and neighbouring open spaces by planting bulbs, by looking after the school woodland and through opportunities for active involvement in the local community.
- Provision for ESD through relevant areas of National Curriculum programmes of study is inconsistent. This is recognised in current development planning which is clearly defining and allocating specialist responsibilities for relevant aspects of ESD.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD is outstanding.

- Your vision to place the sustainability agenda at the heart of all the school does is very clearly articulated to and shared by all members of

the school community. This vision is underpinned by effective planning for each of the key features of the sustainability agenda. This has led to rapid progress from an unpromising starting point, not least because you have been prepared to take a robust stance on staffing.

- The potential contained within the ecological design features of this newly built school is being realised through its everyday life. This is a building which teaches.
- The school is developing a significant role within the local community in ways which reflect the local authority's vision for its regeneration. For example, it provides a well-appreciated broad programme of personal support and training for parents and carers from within own resources and by effective use of expertise provided from elsewhere.
- Productive links have been developed with the local authority and other agencies, for example in creating an effective travel plan.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The use of the sustainability agenda to underpin a commitment to raising achievement across the school is bearing fruit. The targeted involvement of individual pupils and specific groups, for example pupils at risk of exclusion, together with expanding provision for wrap around care has rapidly led to improved behaviour and attitudes to learning, and consequently, to better overall achievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to strengthen the provision for ESD though the relevant National Curriculum programmes of study and ensure that pupils have opportunities to investigate links between the local and global dimensions
- providing pupils with more opportunities to take the initiative in relevant areas of the sustainability agenda.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD 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

Anthony Pearson
Additional Inspector