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Ms J Lunn
The Headteacher
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Dear Ms Lunn

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 12 June to look at the way that learning outside the classroom contributes to your school's curriculum and to pupils' achievement and personal development.

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 are published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; visits to some lessons and seeing the school at work.

The overall effectiveness of the contribution made by learning outside the classroom to the curriculum was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards including personal development

- Standards are high and pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- Many children starting at the school have skills lower than those expected for their age, particularly in relation to social and communication skills. However, they get off to a flying start because provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. From this high base they continue to do very well; the children flourish in Key Stage 1 and their attainment is above the national average. In the 2006 national tests at the end of Year 2, for example, results in reading and writing were significantly above average.

- Pupils' achievement is considerably enhanced by learning outside the classroom which is used extensively to bring learning to life. In Year 1, for example, a visit to the local church enriched work on different religions and, amongst other things, enabled the children to experience a sense of 'awe and wonder'.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding with learning outside the classroom is a vital component in promoting this. Attitudes to learning are excellent and the children are keen to do well. They are interested in their work and can talk enthusiastically about their experiences, be they a visit to the local bakery or ice cream parlour, or a visit to the school by a beekeeper. All these factors combine to create a rich learning environment.

Quality of teaching and learning within LOTC

- All teachers appreciate the importance of learning outside the classroom to be fully integrated into everyday teaching and learning.
- The planning, preparation and follow-up activities for learning outside the classroom are thorough. Teachers make pre-visits to places to which they intend to take the children, prepare their own information and activity packs for visits and identify precise learning activities when they are back in school.
- Teaching is lively and engaging. Teachers have high expectations and use a variety of strategies to keep the children focused. Relationships are excellent and the pupils respond well.
- The school is a welcoming place. Classrooms and corridors are bright and engaging with colourful displays of the children's work. These displays clearly show the importance of learning outside the classroom within teaching and learning and the positive effect it has upon raising pupils' achievement. However, the outside area for the children in the Foundation Stage is not as stimulating as the indoor environment.

Quality of the contribution made by LOTC to the curriculum

- Learning outside the classroom is at the heart of the curriculum and is integrated into the schemes of work in each year group. Every half term each class has a specified learning outside the classroom activity which involves either a visitor coming into school, a visit into the local community or a trip further afield. This provides considerable enrichment to learning and the opportunities provided are greatly appreciated by pupils and parents.
- Learning outside the classroom contributes well to all subjects. The visit to 'Crow's Nest Playground', for example, led to work on forces in science, mapping in geography, sketching in art and making model playground equipment in design technology, as well as to report writing in literacy.
- Although learning outside the classroom is a significant part of the curriculum, the school does not know whether each subject is fairly

represented in the programme of visits and visitors. Activities are evaluated and the curriculum is regularly reviewed but there is no precise check on the coverage of curriculum subjects within the learning outside the classroom programme.

- The school provides a good range of extra curricular clubs which change every half term. The pupils enjoy these opportunities though the take-up by pupils is not always checked. Some clubs, such as the Challenge Club, are also open to parents and this positively supports pupils' learning.

Leadership and management of LOTC

- You have a clear vision of the place of learning outside the classroom and this is shared by all staff who work together as a dedicated team. They are committed to learning outside the classroom and willingly give their time to the activities and to engaging the children in their work.
- Annual reviews of the curriculum help to ensure the relevance of the learning outside the classroom activities undertaken and staff regularly reflect in year groups upon teaching and learning. This approach contributes much to the consistency and effectiveness of the activities undertaken throughout the school as well as to the significant contribution of learning outside the classroom to the pupils' education.
- Leadership and management are strong at all levels and key stage coordinators have a clear picture of how learning outside the classroom enhances learning. However, the school does not formally evaluate or record the impact of learning outside the classroom upon pupils' achievement and personal development.
- The innovative use of support staff allows the school to offer a wide range of extra curricular clubs which are changed every half term.
- Risk assessments are thorough and current safeguarding procedures are in place.

Inclusion

- All groups of pupils participate in the visits which contribute immensely to their learning and pupils enjoy the extra curricular clubs. However, the school does not analyse which pupils access the extra curricular provision. As a result, it does not know well enough which pupils are benefiting from the clubs and which are not.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- exploring ways of evaluating and recording the impact of learning outside the classroom upon pupils' achievement and personal development
- checking that all subjects are fairly represented in learning outside the classroom activities
- checking that all pupils have full access to extra curricular clubs and activities.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop 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

Michael Maddison
Her Majesty's Inspector