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Mr D Dixon
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Dixon

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) - three year longitudinal survey.

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

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. This is a follow up monitoring visit which is intended to assess the progress the school has made in developing ESD throughout the school since the previous visit.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff, pupils including school councillors, a visitor from the Energy Agency, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of one lesson and an assembly, visits to a number of classrooms and outdoor sessions and a survey of the school environment.

Since the last visit, good progress has been made in developing ESD throughout the school. The overall effectiveness is now judged to be good with some aspects outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are good with pupils' personal development in terms of trying to live in a sustainable way being outstanding.

- The pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding about sustainable practice. Those who are actively involved through the eco

club or the range of extra-curricular opportunities offered show excellent understanding and commitment.

- Throughout the school, the pupils are very aware about the need to recycle, conserve energy and to reuse other resources sensibly. They are also beginning to understand the need to purchase ethically.
- Pupils take pride in their outdoor environment and learn to look after it. They show disappointment and concern when teenagers vandalise or leave waste on the school grounds.
- They are beginning to develop an understanding about interdependence and how actions in one part of the world may impact on the lives of others elsewhere.
- Children know they need to lead healthy lives and enjoy being active. Many benefit and enjoy the opportunities to work in the outside classroom learning 'forest' skills, painting murals to brighten the school environment or working in the garden areas.
- Currently, more could be done to promote healthy eating. Pupils know they should eat healthily but do not always choose to do so. This has not been helped by schools meals which have not always been suitably healthy. Packed lunches, especially, often contain unhealthy items such as crisps and chocolate.
- There is some evidence of behaviour change outside the school environment. Pupils are careful not to drop litter and many try to save energy at home by switching off electrical appliances despite not always being encouraged to do so.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Positive relationships with peers and staff reflect the caring family atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils are extremely polite, and caring. They act in a very socially responsible manner.

Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

Insufficient ESD related lessons were observed to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in ESD. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities which focus on the environment and outdoor learning. Pupils learn well and are engaged when they are involved in practical activities linked to this curriculum. The school is experimenting with an innovative system of assessment and reporting to parents which identifies the progress their children are making in terms of education for sustainability. This is at a developmental stage but reinforces the high profile the school places on learning in this area.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the ESD curriculum is good with some outstanding features.

- Teachers are planning a curriculum where there is clear evidence to show that sustainability messages are being reinforced in the

classroom. Some of this work is outstanding but there is variation across classes.

- The school makes good use of a wide range of visits and visitors. The best outcomes are achieved when these are carefully planned into the curriculum. For example, the Year 1 planning links local walks, visits to the allotments, the recycling park and the organic farm into a programme which provides many practical learning opportunities for the pupils.
- Good use is made of themed weeks to promote the sustainability message. These events raise awareness and ensure that the whole school is involved.
- The school is developing an entitlement to ESD into the curriculum. Pupils in the upper school participate in a range of activities (Planet Bowbridge) on Fridays linked to developing their learning about sustainability.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are outstanding.

- The leadership of the school is keen to make sustainability central to the ethos of the school. There is a developing culture in the school which places sustainability at the centre of school life.
- The school management is committed to ethical purchasing and does so wherever possible.
- There are many activities which promote ESD. The proposed development plan for the next academic year will confirm clear strategies to co-ordinate these more effectively.
- There is an increasing core of staff who are committed to the vision of a sustainable school. Others still remain unconvinced.
- The school is keen to continue to foster community links. 'Planet Radio', which is managed by the children, provides an innovative way of encouraging and spreading the sustainability message into the local community.
- The school council is more active and engaged in making decisions about improving the school environment. Pupils feel they have a voice and can make a difference. They are frugal in their spending.
- The new kitchen manager has quickly identified healthy eating as an issue and is determined to make major improvements. An immediate positive impact has already been made with the breakfast club.
- The school works extremely well with outside agencies to promote ESD. For example the pupils benefit from the regular work with the Energy Agency and they have enjoyed planning their new teaching block with architect students from Nottingham University.

Inclusion

The provision linked to ESD is outstanding.

- The whole school ethos is very inclusive and the participation of pupils in the assembly reflected this.
- All pupils are encouraged to participate in the wide range of ESD activities
- The school raises the self esteem of all pupils well and is particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are expected to participate in activities such as 'Planet Forest'. All pupils' contributions are valued and respected.
- There is a real community spirit where all the pupils feel they belong. The children care and respect each other. They all feel safe in this environment and many spoke of the fact they would be sad to leave.
- Girls tend to be more active and engaged with sustainability than the boys.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to develop the curriculum by sharing the good practice which already exists to ensure greater consistency in promoting ESD across the school
- formalising the opportunities for the school council to discuss and share ideas with their classmates to ensure wider participation
- encouraging healthy eating by improving the quality of school lunches and by discouraging the tendency for some pupils to bring unhealthy snacks to school
- working with parents to promote a culture which is more sustainable
- developing the global dimension to raise greater awareness of the diversity of cultures, perhaps through international linking.

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. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools
Specialist Adviser for Geography and ESD