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Mrs Pippa Lloyd
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Dear Mrs Lloyd

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 the school ambassadors, parents and a governor, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of two lessons and an assembly, visits to a number of classrooms and a survey of the school environment.

Since the last visit, the school has made good progress in promoting ESD throughout the school. The overall effectiveness is now judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are outstanding.

- The pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding about sustainable practice. They are very aware about the need to recycle and conserve energy and to reuse other resources.

- They also have an excellent knowledge of the natural environment. For example, they are able to identify a wide range of plants as they are growing in the school allotment and recognise animals and insects in the school grounds.
- Pupils have very good awareness of health and safety issues linked to working in an outdoor environment. They understand the safety aspects of handling tools and even pointed out harmful plants such as the foxglove.
- They are enthusiastic about, and have a good understanding of, the need to lead healthy lives. Many take an active part in the regular fortnightly walk, more are cycling to school and they learn about eating healthily by cooking the produce grown and harvested from their own garden.
- Pupils are aware of the need to lead sustainable lives and to protect the environment. They are able to articulate their concerns and give reasoned opinions.
- There is clear evidence of positive behaviour change, including in the home. Parents comment about how they are encouraged to cycle or walk rather than use the car, recycle, compost waste and switch off lights and electrical equipment. The pupils' determination to make a difference is impressive.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary. Relationships with peers and staff are excellent and reflect the caring family atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils are extremely polite and caring.

Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some aspects being outstanding.

- Good teaching was observed with pupils being engaged and challenged by learning about sustainability.
- There is a strong focus on outdoor learning and pupils are developing excellent life skills. They are learning about the local environment and how to live in it and respect it.
- Sustainability is reinforced through many lessons. For example, pupils celebrate diversity by learning the rhythm of Tuareg fireside chants in music or explore conflicts of interest by studying about proposed developments in the nearby Brecon Beacon National Park.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the ESD curriculum is outstanding.

- Sustainability is a part of the teaching fabric of the school and permeates through much of the curriculum. Learning about the environment and the need to lead sustainable lives is reinforced in

most subjects and many lessons. It is clearly evident in much of the planning.

- The outdoor environment is used very effectively and frequently to enrich learning experiences and engage minds.
- All pupils have an entitlement to work in the outdoor garden and learn practical and collaborative skills. This is now a fundamental part of the school curriculum.
- Pupils also benefit from the variety of visitors and the wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits which enrich their learning. Visits to London provide a good contrast to their own rural environment and excursions to farms develop good links with the local farming community and provide an insight into working on the land.
- The global dimension needs further development. Pupils have a good knowledge of places but links with schools in other environments in England and abroad are currently underutilised.

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 whole staff commitment to developing sustainability throughout the school. Staff have been involved in training and are knowledgeable about ESD.
- The school has moved from raising awareness about sustainability to promoting real behaviour change. Sustainability is helping to draw the community, including parents and local residents, together to support the many initiatives.
- The pupils are very much central to this process. Their input and dynamism, especially through the ECO Council is having a real impact on improving life around the school.
- Pupils are proud of looking after the school even though the age of the building is not conducive to modern schooling. They talked with clarity about how the proposed new build could be eco friendly. They were knowledgeable and aware of the wide range of ways in which it could be made a sustainable school.
- Pupils actively formulate the eco plan which identifies priorities for the school. These ideas are endorsed by adults and become a valuable input into the whole school development plan. Pupils often focus on little practical actions which cumulatively make a real difference in improving the school and its environment.

Inclusion

The provision linked to ESD is outstanding.

- This is a small school which is a real and very caring community. The children care and respect each other. They enjoy working collaboratively and are at ease with adults.
- Everyone is involved in caring for and improving their environment. Pupils enjoy volunteering for tasks and because it is a small school, they all can participate in the school council
- There is, however, a gender divide with clearly defined roles. The girls are more involved in planning and decision making; the boys are more content with practicalities such as collecting recycled materials and performing any physical work required in the school grounds. They are also more reticent to become involved actively in the school council since this reduces their time to play outside after lunch.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- building links with partner secondary schools to share good practice to ensure that when pupils move schools they are able to continue their interests and good work linked to sustainability
- encouraging the boys to become more actively engaged in the decision making process; the school council sessions may need to be formalised within curriculum time to achieve this
- developing curriculum links with partner schools in Nigeria and South East England to promote a greater understanding of diversity and the global dimension.

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

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