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Mr Bryan Schram  
Headteacher  
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Milton Keynes  
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Dear Mr Schram

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 and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of one lesson, and a survey of the school environment.

Over the past year, the reorganisation and re-designation of the school from a middle school to a primary school has been a priority and has limited the time available to promote and develop ESD. Some limited progress has been made since the last visit when the school was judged to be at an introductory stage of development. The overall effectiveness as regards promoting sustainability is now judged to be satisfactory.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are satisfactory overall with aspects of pupils' personal development being good.

- Pupils are aware of basic sustainability principles. They are aware of the need to re-cycle and understand the ethics of 'Fair Trade'. They are beginning to develop an understanding of the connectivity of places.
- There is evidence that 'behaviour' change is happening with recycling becoming second nature to many. This is supported and encouraged well through the eco-points awards. However, reduction in using a whole range of resources remains less well developed.
- Although there is no sustained work in the community, pupils benefit when they are given opportunities to participate in community events. They enjoyed being involved in designing aspects of the recently opened Eco-park as well as suggesting how to improve open space in Downs Barn.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to participate and voice their views. Following their concern that they were not sufficiently involved in meaningful decision making, there is evidence that pupil voice has improved. They are now able to express their opinions more fully through a number of focus groups as well as the School Council and Eco- Committee.
- Behaviour around the school is good, although some boys can become a little boisterous and overexcited in some classes.

#### 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.

#### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Planning to include opportunities to support the ESD agenda is at an embryonic stage of development. Planning is better developed in subjects such as science and geography but in other areas there remains a lack of clarity. As a result, aspects can be taught in an enjoyable way but in isolation so that ideas are not fully developed to enable the progressive development of knowledge and understanding about sustainability.
- Sustainability is well promoted through themed weeks and through assemblies which reinforce messages and maintain a high profile for the need to lead sustainable lives. For example, 'Fair Trade Fortnight' and 'Global Week' are used as part of a cross curricular approach to make the pupils' learning more relevant and meaningful.
- Effective use is made of outside agencies and visitors to promote sustainability linked to themes such as recycling, travel to school, litter, poverty and fair trade.
- The extensive school grounds are currently underutilised in terms of learning outside the classroom. There are plans to develop aspects

such as the school garden but progress has been slower than expected due to other priorities.

- International links, for example with a school in Ghana, are at an early stage of development.

## Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are satisfactory overall.

- There remains a strong commitment to ESD from the senior management, despite the fact that energies have been deflected recently through the reorganisation of the school.
- The school philosophy is strongly linked to the Every Child Matters agenda which relates well to ESD.
- ESD is well identified in the school action plan. Strategies such as the need to improve pupil voice and make better use of outdoor resources are key areas which are acknowledged as needing further development.
- The appointment of a committed and enthusiastic governor to champion ESD throughout the school is a positive move which shows a clear commitment to ensuring that sustainability becomes firmly embedded in every day school life.
- Links with the community to support the diverse range of cultures represented in the school as part of extended schools are at an early stage of development. Some aspects such as the Tamil Sunday school and the community football have been successful.
- Although staff awareness has been raised through appropriate training in staff meetings, the staff are not yet fully committed or engaged with the wider sustainability agenda.

## Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good overall.

- The school actively encourages inclusive practice. For example, the weekly 'Sharing Assembly' encourages pupils to celebrate and share their successes.
- Very effective support is provided through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support Service unit and the Learning and Achievement base.
- Work with the community is seen as an intrinsic part of the life of the school. For example Muslims and Tamils make frequent use of the school facilities. High priority is given to respecting diversity and celebrating cultures.
- The Eco-group and wide range of focus groups allow most pupils to participate and have a voice in decision making. Pupils are now more active in identifying issues and deciding what can be improved.

- The school recognises that more could be done to challenge some groups of pupils, notably the more gifted and talented.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the need to ensure that there is greater whole staff commitment to promote ESD and that the load is shared more equitably
- ensuring that ESD is delivered more clearly through the taught curriculum by integrating aspects more fully into the planning and schemes of work
- making good use of the designated governor to support and help drive through initiatives such as ethical purchasing and school travel plans
- making better use of the outside environment to promote sustainability.

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