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Mrs Alison Ewins
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ewins

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 22 May 2007 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, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, visits to some lessons, lunchtime play, a music workshop 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

- All pupils achieve very well in relation to their individual education targets because of the excellent care they receive and the high expectations set to develop their communication skills.
- Innovative and imaginative use of information communication technology helps the pupils to make very good progress. Switches, computers, the interactive whiteboard and PowerPoint presentations are used creatively to develop the pupils' skills. LOTC activities are captured assiduously

through use of video and digital cameras and all recordings are integrated immediately into lessons to consolidate and extend the pupils' understanding.

- You have excellent assessment procedures that link well to daily lesson planning, so that all pupils' needs are met effectively. Pupils have clear targets to improve communication and, most importantly, these are understood by all the adults who support them in a sensitive manner.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are impressive. They try hard to respond appropriately to questions and tasks. The concentration exhibited by the younger pupils in the music workshop was indeed a joy to observe.

Quality of teaching and learning within LOTC

- Relationships and care, both in and out of the classroom, are outstanding. You and the staff understand the particular physical and emotional needs of the Claremont pupils and are skilled at getting the best out of them. Staff are sensitive to pupils, and encourage them in a positive purposeful way. Because you have excellent knowledge of individual pupils and you are in tune with their feelings, work is planned carefully to ensure they succeed, and they do.
- Lessons and activities are exciting, enriched by the frequent opportunities for LOTC which are structured thoughtfully to link in to curriculum themes. The visits to the 'Bear Factory', Bristol Cathedral and the 'Docks' are examples of how learning is brought to life for the pupils. These practical experiences clearly motivated the pupils to produce some pleasing work, particularly in English, history and design technology.
- Without exception, teaching is lively and of a high quality. The adults work as an impressive team to re-enforce the pupils' learning targets and communicate with them enthusiastically using a range of techniques. This ensures the pupils achieve and all are delighted when they do. Praise is used assiduously to reward progress and is rightfully earned.

Quality of the contribution made by LOTC to the curriculum

- The school has a fundamental belief that LOTC experiences are vital to meet the pupils' complex learning needs. As a consequence, you and the staff make every effort to ensure that LOTC is at the heart of the curriculum.
- Planning is meticulous at all levels and LOTC is integrated successfully into all subjects, featuring strongly in every theme. Activities are chosen thoughtfully to enrich and whet pupils' appetite for learning. There is a high level of practical work and opportunities for pupils to interact with their peers and the adults to make learning meaningful. The monitoring of LOTC by you, the deputy headteacher and subject leaders is rigorous and findings feed into future planning.
- There is excellent progression for LOTC to cater for the pupils' specific and developing needs. Younger pupils are provided with suitable experiences

in other areas of the school first, before making the transition to learning further afield, for example, at the mainstream schools, the local community and beyond.

- The range of campus enrichment activities for LOTC is impressive. These too are planned carefully to complement and enhance the formal curriculum. Pupils receive excellent opportunities to learn with the mainstream pupils and the preparation work for joint projects is comprehensive. It was a delight to see the ease at which the pupils played together at the lunchtime 'Patio Play', the genuine welcome a pupil received from peers when attending a lesson at the infant school and the excellent response from all pupils at the music workshop. Such innovative work is contributing significantly to the pupils' personal development.
- The programme of educational visits is commendable and, where possible, linked appropriately to the curriculum. This work is diligently co-ordinated and recorded to contribute to the pupils' assessments.

Leadership and management of LOTC

- LOTC is central to the school's vision and has been for some time. The well thought out philosophy and beliefs for pupils' learning are suited to your school and have led curriculum innovation over several years. That said, you and your deputy headteacher are not complacent; your drive and determination to improve LOTC is commendable. The power point presentation in the entrance foyer is a fitting testament to the school's commitment to LOTC.
- You and your staff have a deep understanding of the needs of your pupils and there is strong professional dialogue and a steely resolve to evaluate practice to improve provision. The school's assessment and tracking system is exceptionally good. It is robustly monitored by the deputy headteacher in close liaison with the staff.
- You are well supported by other staff members who understand the strategic direction LOTC is taking. This is sensibly a priority in the school development plan and progress is being monitored rigorously. Current thinking to improve LOTC through extended provision, although at an embryonic stage, is both visionary and imaginative. Future plans to develop the site at Claremont to improve provision for LOTC are appropriate.

Inclusion

- You lead a very inclusive school where the needs of all the pupils are met in a caring, creative and consultative way. The campus work with the mainstream schools is both innovative and exciting.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- considering ways to include the pupils' views as to how they learn best and incorporate them into the assessment profiles.

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

Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector