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Mrs D Downing
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Downing

Ofsted survey inspection programme – New models of school leadership: influences and outcomes

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, pupils, parents and governors, during my visit on 16 September 2008 to evaluate the impact of new models of leadership on school improvement.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included discussions with governors, staff, pupils, parents, a scrutiny of relevant documentation and a lesson observation.

The overall effectiveness of the model of leadership, a federation of a first and primary school which has led to an amalgamation on two sites, is good.

The impact of the model of leadership on achievement and standards is satisfactory.

- Overall, standards across the school are broadly in line with national expectations. The school's tracking and targeting systems ensure that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.
- The school has prioritised pupils' writing as an area for development. The impact of this work has been good. Work scrutiny and unvalidated 2008 results for Year 2 demonstrate that standards are rising. Pupils

report their growing enjoyment of writing. Similarly, the introduction of a daily session of systematic phonics is making a positive impact on pupils' spelling in most classes. These examples demonstrate the good potential of the new model of leadership to improve outcomes for pupils in other subject areas.

- Senior leaders have developed outstanding links for pupils across the two sites. Many social and curricular activities are undertaken alongside the parallel class on the other site. As a result, when pupils move from one site to another they feel well prepared and integrate seamlessly.
- Parents noted that larger classes since federation have provided many children with greater opportunities for socialisation with a wider range of peers.

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- At the time of the previous inspection in September 2006, the school was asked to provide training for newly appointed subject leaders. One product of work in this area is that a wider range of subject leaders are involved in monitoring teaching and learning. Teachers receive good quality written feedback following observations, which they act upon. As a result, teaching has improved.
- Targets are appropriately differentiated for varying ability groups, with a stretch target for the most able pupils. Writing exercise books demonstrate that teachers annotate pupils' work with care so that their strengths are acknowledged and weaker areas of performance are highlighted.

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- The school is developing an engaging thematic curriculum, underpinned by the National Curriculum, with discrete subject teaching where necessary. This work is bolstered by the combined expertise of adults from both sites.
- Pupils are enthused by this curriculum and find it challenging. Parents are confident that the school is developing an exciting and pertinent curriculum for their children. Rightly, they wish for a termly synopsis of the areas their children will be studying in English and mathematics to complement the information they receive for other subjects and ensure they are able to support their children's learning out of school.
- At present there is no summative overview of the curriculum which demonstrates how a child's knowledge and skills should progressively develop from year to year through each theme and across each National Curriculum subject.

- Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is broadened by the use of language assistants from other European countries. These assistants bring a valuable dimension to the curriculum.

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good.

- Leadership structures have been successfully reshaped to ensure that all staff and governors are responsible for creating one school which provides parity of experience and equal opportunities for pupils across both sites.
- The number of subject responsibilities held by any one individual has decreased. As a result, subject leaders' focus is sharper and more effective.
- Committed governors have ensured that the sites retain a small school ethos whilst maximising the potential flexibility offered by shared use of resources and staff across both sites.
- Governors and staff have consulted parents and the community effectively in order to develop the federation at an appropriate pace.
- The school derives targets for pupils' achievement from assessment information and its tracking systems. However, these are not yet embedded in improvement planning. This limits governors' effectiveness in holding the school to account for its work.
- Some parents believe that pupils spend too much curriculum time travelling between sites.

The impact of the model of leadership on inclusion is good.

- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good progress.
- Senior leaders and staff target support effectively to combat underachievement.
- Pupils from all minority ethnic groups speak highly of the school, and there is no disparity in their rates of progress
- Parents note that all children are well cared for at the school and that the school responds quickly to ensure that pupils receive personalised programmes to ensure they achieve.

Area for development, which we discussed, include:

- providing a termly synopsis for parents of the areas their children will be studying in English and mathematics to complement the information they receive for other subjects
- developing a curriculum overview to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed as they move through the school

- ensuring that improvement planning contains annual targets for improvement for each cohort so that governors are able to hold the school more effectively to account
- considering ways by which pupils spend less time travelling between sites during the school day.

I hope these observations are useful to you as you continue to develop the school.

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be made available to the team who conduct your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Bradley Simmons
Her Majesty's Inspector