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Mrs J Lawrence
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lawrence

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

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 15 October 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 a representative from the local authority governors, staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and a lesson observation.

The overall effectiveness of the model of leadership, an informal federation with a nursery school, is good.

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

- Children enter the school with skills below those typically expected and reach broadly average standards in reading writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1.
- The achievement of children in the Reception classes is improving because activities are better matched to their needs and build effectively on their previous learning.
- Good systems for tracking pupils' progress are being established and, as a result of improving assessment information, teachers are quicker to identify where there is underachievement. There is still more to do in sharing the excellent practice within the federation, particularly in using assessment information to plan learning that challenges all pupils appropriately.

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

- The introduction of a well-thought out Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum has improved teaching practice and accelerated children's progress.
- Good opportunities for staff to share expertise are helping to develop teaching methods which capture children's interest and increase their enjoyment of learning.
- Teaching assistants give pupils effective support in lessons.

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

- There has been a good focus on ensuring the curriculum matches pupils' needs. Since the last inspection, links between subjects have been enhanced and the introduction of a creative curriculum is improving pupils' engagement with learning.
- Strengths within the federation are being used successfully to improve provision. For example, EYFS staff are much more aware of the importance of making effective use of the outside learning environment and planning activities that develop children's independence.
- The federation provides a good range of visits, visitors and out of school activities that enrich pupils' learning.
- There is good extended provision for pupils at the beginning and end of the school day.

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

- The headteacher, staff, governors and local authority are united in their vision to provide the best possible education for pupils through the federation. Their strong shared sense of purpose has been central to the improvements secured and the move towards amalgamation.
- The development of the leadership structure has been a good opportunity for senior staff to enhance their skills and take on additional responsibility. The school recognises the need to ensure subject leaders develop their skills in monitoring pupils' progress.
- Staff have good development opportunities linked to individual needs and the federation's improvement priorities.
- The governing bodies are working together effectively, holding both schools to account whilst ensuring a smooth transition to the amalgamation.

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

- Detailed and accurate assessment information is helping teachers match work more closely to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In addition, the employment of a

member of staff who works across the federation is helping to further accelerate the progress of these pupils.

- There is a strong and effective focus on providing a caring environment that ensures the emotional well-being of all pupils.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing the role of subject leaders with a sharp focus on monitoring pupils' progress
- improving teachers' use of assessment information to plan work that will appropriately challenge all pupils.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of your school and the federation.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards
Additional Inspector