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Mr R Collins
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Collins

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff at Parkdale Primary School, during my visit on the 13 October 2008 to look at work in promoting equality.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included discussions with staff, pupils, a governor, parents, a playworker, colleagues from the Local Authority Ethnic Minority Achievement team, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observations of three lessons or parts of lessons.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is good.

Features of good practice observed

- Vulnerable pupils, such as those who have English as an additional language, are well served by a school that takes interest in each individual. Resources are appropriately matched to pupils through identifying needs quickly and then taking the right action to help them progress. The school enjoys good contacts with other agencies who provide additional support to pupils when required.
- There has been an intensive whole school focus on assessment, tracking and targeting, with the result that standards have risen sharply over the past year for all pupils including those with English as an additional language.

- The school offers an innovative play therapy provision which has led to pupils who were refugees or new arrivals demonstrating improved problem solving and social skills both in and outside the classroom.
- The school has successfully involved parents in a variety of workshops which have increased parental understanding, involvement, and commitment in pursuing the schools aims, with resulting positive impact on pupils' attitudes and attainment. For example, a parent training evening on the target sheets the school uses meant teachers, pupils, and parents could discuss progress against original attainment in a much more meaningful way.
- The school has worked positively in consulting with parents from a range of cultures on the details of the sex and relationships curriculum, and as a result all pupils now receive appropriate sex education as no child is withdrawn.
- Pupils have a very good attitude to those they meet and have positive relationships with each other. For example, a new arrival from Poland quickly found she "made lots of friends." A governor put it well: "The children are all fantastic ambassadors for Parkdale and we are very proud of them."
- The school has made extensive use of support from the local authority to build a robust tracking system and as a result of the structures now in place teachers and school management know all their pupils well. Assessment information is shared with parents and children which enables the school to pick up on any pupils likely to fall behind and intervene quickly. As a result, for example, a child who was socially isolated due to English as an additional language issues quickly met her language development targets following intervention from a playworker.
- The head teacher has a clear and aspirational vision with regard to improving achievement for all pupils, including the most vulnerable. Staff are skilled in tailoring work to match pupils' identified needs, with the result that vulnerable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress.'
- The school has a proactive approach to meeting the needs of all the pupils in the school. For example, staff were trained in particular behaviour strategies in working with looked after children to pre-empt and avoid any potential difficulties.
- The school is participating in a wide range of projects intended to improve standards both for vulnerable pupils and others throughout the school. For example it has trialled a social and emotional aspects of learning course, initially for a small group of pupils, which is now implemented across the whole school, and a playworker has been appointed to work with pupils with additional needs including refugees or those with English as an additional language
- The school engages positively with other schools, for example when children transfer to secondary, by providing appropriate and timely information on children's specific needs. As a result the receiving school makes appropriate preparation, and enables pupils to start secondary school confidently.

Areas for development

- The curriculum does not always engage the interest of some of the pupil groups in the school and is not consistently flexible in aiming to meet their

needs, aspirations, and interests. The school recognises this and is at an early stage of developing this aspect.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities in Parkdale Primary School.

As I explained previously, 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

David McMahon
Additional Inspector