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Mrs J Milham
Headteacher
St John Fisher Primary School
Sandy Lane West
Littlemore
Oxford
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Dear Mrs Milham

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff at St John Fisher Primary School, during my visit on the 19 November 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, parents, colleagues from other schools, colleagues from the local authority, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observations of four lessons or parts of lessons.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is good.

Features of good practice observed

- The school has a strong Christian ethos which permeates the work of the school and characterises all its interactions within the school and through the wider community. As a result inclusion for all children is a high priority and this is translated into actions that mean children from a variety of backgrounds work within a secure and happy environment where relationships are without fail excellent. Children, parents and workers from outside the school consistently comment on the care invested in individual children and the resulting fact that children from different groups, such as new arrivals or Travellers, are not discriminated against.
- The small numbers of Traveller children in the school are well catered for, with one parent stating "There is an element of discrimination in society but not in this school. The school has been a mountain of help." The Local

Authority Advisory Service for Travellers notes how inclusive the school is and this makes a positive difference for attendance and outcomes for children from Traveller families.

- Parents are appreciative of the amount of time invested in home school communication, and for practical help that is offered to them and their children. A School Pastoral Care worker, for example, facilitated one child with English as an Additional Language accessing appropriate medical care. As a result of the support of the school the parent was able to gain another assessment which meant the underlying medical problem was dealt with and the child's attendance improved.
- The school makes good use of other agencies to support learning in the school. For example, multiagency meetings are well organised by the school so that decisions around support strategies for children can be quickly put in place by different providers, such as Social Services, medical or legal agencies.
- Tracking and assessment of pupils is finely tuned to individual needs and takes place at regular intervals throughout the year. The school uses a traffic light system to track individual progress and interventions are quickly put in place for children who are not making expected progress.
- Teaching Assistants are very well deployed, working under the direction of class teachers in the mornings and under the Deputy Headteacher/SENCO in the afternoons. This tightly focussed structure, with built in regular reviews of pupil progress, means staff are quickly deployed as needed to work with individual pupils who receive systematic and regular support.
- Colleagues from other agencies comment on the openness of the school and how it is happy to look to others to build capacity when needed. For example, when a child with severe Physical Difficulties including medical needs was taken on roll the school acknowledged it needed assistance which meant it could be provided quickly. Workers from other agencies and parents appreciate this openness and are confident in this approach.

Areas for development

- The policy for marking work is inconsistently applied, which means that for some children, for example those with EAL, assessment for learning opportunities are missed.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities in St John Fisher 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