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Ms M Lynes
Abbeydale Primary School
Glen Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
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Dear Ms Lynes

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 04 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: scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of parts of lessons and interviews with staff, pupils, a parent and representatives of other organisations who contribute to the promotion of equality throughout the school.

The quality of your provision to promote equalities is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- The school recognises the importance of identifying individuals who could be vulnerable, irrespective of their background or circumstances. In addition to monitoring pupils' progress very carefully, staff are extremely vigilant in spotting even the smallest signs that a pupil may not appear to be enjoying school as much as they have been in the past or that they might be troubled in any other way.
- The way that teachers tailor work to meet individual needs is exceptional. As a result, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, all have equal opportunities to achieve success whilst working with similar degrees of independence. This is highly beneficial to their personal development as well as their academic achievement and is reflected in the fact that assessments at the end of both key stages show that no group of pupils is underachieving in comparison with any other.

- The school has developed an excellent speaking and listening project, complete with learning materials for parents as well as pupils. This strongly promotes the speaking and listening skills of new arrivals, many of whom start school with no prior understanding of the English language. The success of this is evident in the fact that, last year, three quarters of Year 6 pupils met national expectations for English and a tenth exceeded them.
- An extensive programme of activities involving parents and pupils extends into school holidays. These activities are open to all but focus particularly on the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. They are very well attended and much appreciated by parents and pupils. Activities combine opportunities for all, parents included, to improve their reading, often through carefully planned recreational activities and play.
- Strong links with parents, carers and local community groups are greatly helped by the work of a bilingual learning mentor. Many staff are also bilingual.
- By holding parent/carer meetings in school time and by always offering a translation service the school achieves almost 100% parental attendance at these meetings.

Areas for development

- Ensure that records from previous schools are used to contribute to a longer term picture of the progress and personal development of pupils arriving other than at the normal time of admission.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities in your 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

Alastair Younger
Additional Inspector