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Mrs P Lloyd
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lloyd

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) - three year longitudinal survey

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my final visit on 23 October 2008 to look at work in ESD.

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. This was a follow up monitoring visit which is intended to assess the progress the school has made in developing ESD throughout the school since the previous visit.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff, parents and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of two lessons and an assembly as well as observations of the school environment.

Since the last visit, the school has continued to make progress in developing sustainability throughout the school. The overall effectiveness is outstanding and sustainability has become embedded as a core value throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are outstanding.

- Pupils show very good knowledge and understanding about sustainability and issues related to sustainability. They understand the need to lead more sustainable lives. This is particularly evident in their

very strong commitment to recycling and using resources more efficiently.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the impact that global warming may have on their own lives and the lives of others around the world. They are affronted when adults or older siblings waste energy or disrespect their environment.
- There is good evidence to show that they take their responsibilities seriously and try to take their good practice home. As one child remarked 'At one time we used to drive to the recycling site. Now we take our rubbish there on our bikes'. However, they are frustrated by the fact that not every adult is as responsible as they are. Economic necessity, especially the higher costs of fuel and energy, is beginning to change some attitudes at home.
- The pupils have a strong sense of social and environmental responsibility which they are keen to take forward to their senior school in order to make a difference to the world around them.
- There is a greater awareness of the wider world due to the increased emphasis on this aspect in the curriculum. Links with Nigeria and visitors from the Gambia have raised the profile of different cultures and distant localities.
- Frequent exposure to the outdoor environment has supported pupils' learning about the need to stay safe. Pupils act and behave responsibly when working in the outdoor environment.
- Pupils lead active lives and enjoy the outdoors. They understand the need to lead healthy lives and the importance of eating healthy foods. They enjoy growing vegetables in their outdoor garden and are developing useful horticultural skills which some are able to share with parents at home.
- Pupils understand the practicalities of living in a widespread rural environment and how this sometimes makes it impractical to reduce their carbon footprint as much as they would like. For example, many would prefer to walk or cycle to school but understand that distances and a lack of safe routes to school make this difficult.
- Despite the age of the current buildings, pupils look after their school environment which is litter free and well maintained. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to care for themselves, each other and their environment.
- Behaviour around the school is excellent. Pupils are responsive, keen to engage with adults and teachers and there are very positive and caring relationships evident around the school.
- The school is a very small close-knit community with a real family atmosphere. Pupils are happy and feel safe and secure. There is a strong sense of belonging which was exemplified by the sharing assembly at the end of the school day.

Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

The quality of teaching and learning about sustainability is good with some aspects which are outstanding.

- There is a strong sustainability theme in many of the lessons which is also identified in teacher's planning.
- Pupils particularly enjoy the many opportunities to develop practical skills and work in the outdoor environment. They talk very positively about the dedicated curriculum time which allows them to grow vegetables in the extensive school garden.
- Pupils enjoy working collaboratively as part of a team. They are very supportive of each other not only in the classroom but also at play.
- Visits to a sewage works, a hydro electric power plant and the residential to the alternative technology centre help to reinforce learning by bringing the theory taught in the classroom to life. Pupils talk positively about the many opportunities they get to learn through such out of classroom experiences.
- Pupils are particularly interested in the natural world and biodiversity and enjoy learning about creatures and their habitats through their work in science. This is enhanced by their frequent experiences in the outdoor learning environment.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of where their food comes from. They value the effort that goes into growing and producing the food they eat and they understand well the cycle of life.
- Pupils are learning about sustainability from being involved in the planning for the new school build. For example, the school has used well the opportunities for pupils to utilise their maths and measuring skills to plot outlines of classrooms.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the ESD curriculum continues to be outstanding.

- Learning about sustainability and how to lead more sustainable lives permeates through much of the curriculum. Pupils themselves have identified that much of their work is linked to sustainability in one way or another, whether it is through the books and stories they read in literacy or through more practical work in science.
- Work in practical subjects such as art and design reinforces sustainability messages by using recycled materials as often as possible. Pupils' interest is engaged by design and practical work linked to alternative and sustainable technology.
- The school makes regular quality use of the outdoor learning environment. The school grounds and the local rural environment provide a world of discovery for the pupils.
- The wide range of enrichment activities, including visits to places near and far, is a real 'jewel' in the curriculum. These opportunities have

raised pupils' awareness of the need to look after and respect their environment. Pupils gain much from events such as the 'wellie walks', picking apples in the nearby orchard or watching lambing on a local farm.

- Teaching about the global dimension is becoming better embedded within the curriculum both within individual subjects and through themed projects
- The school has developed strong links with the local community and is now trying to extend this to a wider more diverse community. Links with schools in Nigeria and Birmingham to support learning about diversity remain at an embryonic stage.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are outstanding.

- The leadership of the school is supportive and has identified sustainability as a core value central to the ethos of the school. There is a strong team ethic which supports this.
- The school development plan has clear links to the sustainability agenda, especially linked to 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. The self-evaluation clearly identifies strengths as well as opportunities for further developments.
- Teachers and adults in the school have benefited from opportunities to participate in professional development linked to raising the profile, and their understanding, of sustainability. This has helped them plan delivery more effectively.
- The school identifies itself as a hub of the community. This has raised the status and profile of sustainability in both the school and the local community.
- Pupils, teachers, governors parents and local residents are actively engaged with the consultations about the proposed new build which will enable the school to become a truly 'sustainable school'.
- Pupils, in particular, are well informed about their proposed new school and eager to share their ideas with both architects and planners to ensure that sustainable features and low carbon output is incorporated into the design.
- Pupils continue to be actively engaged in formulating the eco-plan for the school. Boys are playing an increasingly active role in the decision making process.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to foster learning about diversity and the global dimension, especially through the developing links with contrasting schools both in England and overseas
- ensuring that the new school becomes a 'building that teaches' about sustainability

- continuing to share good practice especially through the developing links with partner secondary schools.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, 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

Leszek Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools
Specialist Adviser for Geography and ESD