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Mrs A Noake  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Noake

Ofsted survey inspection programme – the impact of new models of leadership on school improvement

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 27 January 2009 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 governors, staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the model of leadership, a hard federation with another primary school, was judged to be good.

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

- Overall, standards are well above average and pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is much higher than seen nationally.
- Pupils' enjoyment of science, a good emphasis on its practical aspects and strong teacher subject knowledge, are key features that enable pupils to achieve very well.
- Pupils' reading skills are strong throughout the school but staff rightly recognise writing skills, although similar to those seen nationally, are not as good as they should be. A programme of support, mirroring the success in mathematics, has been put in place to address this.

- As a result of the warm, supportive atmosphere and the encouragement given pupils are confident and thoroughly enjoy school.

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

- Teachers' skills are improving through opportunities to work collaboratively within the federation. For example, skills in the teaching of mathematics have improved and this has resulted in pupils making better progress in the subject.
- Good use is made of teachers' subject skills, for example in the teaching of French.
- The introduction of common procedures for tracking and assessing pupils' progress across the federation is effective and is helping teachers to match work to pupils' ability and tackle underachievement quickly.

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

- The schools are able to access a more diverse curriculum through sharing the resources within the federation. There is now more scope to include visitors such as sports coaches, musicians and theatre groups.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities afforded by the curriculum, particularly the practical activities and the wide range of enrichment activities.

The impact of the new model of leadership on the quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

- You and your senior leaders have developed very strong working relationships that are at the heart of the federation's success. The clarified and sharply defined roles and responsibilities of senior leaders enhance capacity for continuous improvement.
- The reorganisation of the governing body provides the schools with strong support, strategic guidance and challenge. Governors know the schools exceptionally well and their support has been invaluable in ensuring the school's continuing success.
- The federation has provided leaders with increased opportunities to develop their skills. This is reflected in the improved monitoring of the work of the schools, particularly the monitoring of teaching and learning.

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

- The employment of a coordinator to oversee support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the federation has proved to be very efficient and ensures pupils make good progress.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress as a result of well-targeted and personalised support.

- There are excellent links with parents who provide valuable support to the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- accelerate pupils' progress in writing so they attain as well as they do in other subjects.

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