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05 February 2009

Mrs K Bramwell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bramwell

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 27 January 2009 to look at work in promoting equality. Please convey my thanks to the pupils, parents and governors I met during my visit.

The visit provided valuable information that 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 key members of staff, pupils, parents, governors and the observation of parts of four lessons.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's provision for vulnerable pupils is outstandingly well led and managed. This was notably evident in staff deployment which is organised unequivocally to meet the pupils' needs. The school is organised extremely efficiently and the clarity of staff roles and responsibilities helps the school to run smoothly on a day to day basis and in meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils. The governors have a very good strategic view of the school and their work, along with that of the headteacher, in planning for the future of the school and a potential new building, shows a school that is responding well to the needs of its changing local community and pupil population.

- The induction of pupils to the school is very good. This includes thorough initial assessments which inform any necessary interventions for individual and groups of pupils as well as appropriate curriculum changes. Analyses of these assessments have also led the school to bolster the support it provides for parents to enable them support their children at home. The school's battery of assessments and screenings enable staff to have an excellent knowledge of potentially vulnerable pupils.
- The progress made by many vulnerable pupils is very good. For example a group of six Year 4 pupils who had poor phonic knowledge made progress better than the rest of their classmates in reading and writing as a result of an intervention programme. Higher than predicted results were attained by a group of six other pupils who were assessed for dyslexia following the introduction of dyslexia friendly practice in the school. Seventeen pupils of Indian heritage attained better than similar pupils nationally in 2008.
- The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their enjoyment of lessons was clear to see and their behaviour around the school was impressive. Their confidence is tangible and this stems in part from the school's focus on speaking and listening and the practice the pupils get in their lessons. The school's work on community cohesion is very strong. Pupils develop a good insight and empathy with others from different communities, often because pupils from different communities are confident enough to share their experiences and traditions with their peers. The school's move to a theme based curriculum has been successful in giving pupils wider and more coherent experiences. Educational visits, for example, add a great deal to the life experiences of many pupils, particularly those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Staff value all pupils highly and they ensure that vulnerable pupils are not disadvantaged in any way. They are keen to ensure that pupils' wider achievements are recognised as well as their academic progress. Pupils' confidence and self esteem develop in part at least from the respect they are shown by staff and the good relationships they have with them as well as the opportunities they are given to make a mark for themselves.
- The school's work with parents from the outset is splendid. Staff value parents' views and opinions and take these on board when assessing pupils. Communication is good and parents are well informed about their children's targets and progress. The parents interviewed were very positive about the school and its focus on every individual child.
- The quality of teaching and learning observed was not less than good and half was outstanding. The matching of work to individual needs was a feature of these lessons. Praise was used pervasively and pupils valued this very much. Good collaboration between pupils was also evident and this helped to give opportunities for pupils to practice their speaking and listening. This work is reaping rewards.

- The professional development staff receive and their preparedness to meet the changing needs of pupils is good. A helpful example is the school's response to pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Awareness raising training was given to staff to ensure all staff were fully aware of the autistic spectrum and implications for the school. In addition more focussed training was provided for identified staff so they could provide augmented communication and consistency of approaches for identified pupils. These have been successful and the school reports good progress for pupils concerned.
- The eight pupils interviewed were extremely positive about the school. They were easily able to give examples of how they and their peers had been helped to overcome any difficulties. They were particularly impressed by their personal, social and health education lessons and the opportunities they have to air their views and consider the views of others during circle time.

Area for development

- The school has very good knowledge of individual pupils and tracks their progress well. However, it should additionally use the collated information it has on pupils' personal development and well-being to check for patterns and trends across the school which would not be evident just by monitoring individual pupils' personal development.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to promote equalities in the 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

Eric Craven
Her Majesty's Inspector