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Una McNicolls
Family Learning Adviser
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Dear Una

Ofsted Good Practice Survey Programme 2008/09

An evaluation of the benefits of family learning for individuals, families and communities

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on the 4th November 2008. I am particularly grateful to you, all your staff and learners for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up a great deal of time during the visit to meet with me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

The visit provided much useful evidence, which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting for the family learning survey. I was particularly pleased to meet partners and foster carers at Newcastle Civic Centre, and to hear how their learning had helped them to become more self aware, promote positive family relationships and give them social networks and support for the complex needs of the foster children.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made on this one-day visit included: interviews with staff, learners and observations of family learning sessions. A range of documentation and reports was reviewed.

The family learning provision I sampled during my one-day visit at Newcastle is very good. I agreed to provide a summary of the good practice seen and to identify some areas for development, and I outline the main findings as bulleted points below.

The main strengths are:

- Very good development of skills, attitudes and motivation for learners
- Highly skilled and creative tutors who motivate and enthuse
- Wide and innovative curriculum
- Good outreach work by parent support advisers
- Very effective and sustained partnerships
- Good management of provision
- Clear focus on achievement of qualifications

The areas for development are:

- Insufficient use of SMART targets in individual learning plans
- Insufficient identification of all progression pathways

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your Family Learning provision. If there are any points or aspects of the visit you wish to discuss, please contact me. As we will be evaluating the survey, you may be contacted in the future to find out your views. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted Website.

Yours sincerely

June Cramman
Her Majesty's Inspector