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12 March 2009

Mrs A Bowen-Breslin
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bowen-Breslin

Ofsted survey: good practice in capturing the user voice

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 24 February 2009 to look at work on capturing the user voice.

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 interviews with staff, and groups of children, meetings with the school council and representatives from the parents' council, discussion on case studies provided by the school and scrutiny of documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- The school has a very clear vision and strategy for the development and embedding of children's voice to support raising achievement and aspirations for all. The initial priority, to establish a strong ethos and consistent expectations of attendance, behaviour and learning, has now been achieved. The school is now moving forward on the development of a more adventurous curriculum to empower and engage children further.
- Developments have been well-paced, well-planned and appropriately resourced, for example through the creation of non-teaching senior posts and the excellent and creative use of teaching assistants, working in partnership with teaching staff.
- Children are confident, articulate and proud of their school; the school's focus on engaging and involving children and their families has led to many improvements in children's achievement, attendance and behaviour.

- An outstanding feature of the school is the full engagement of children in the learning process through self and peer-assessment and in setting targets for their learning. They talk with confidence about learning processes.
- The school has built on this work through the recent introduction of the creative curriculum which seeks to challenge and extend children further through the development and enhancement of their evaluative, planning and presentational skills.
- A wide range of strategies are used to gain the views of children and draw on their experiences. These include use of questionnaires and many opportunities for discussion with groups and individual children about their learning.
- Participation in the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities is high with an emphasis on participation for all and more specialist involvement for some. The school's focus on creative and arts activities has been targeted successfully at developing children's confidence and achievement
- Children have many opportunities to take responsibility and they show impressive understanding of what this means, for example as playground buddies, school council members, class helpers.
- The user voice is inclusive. Well-targeted support for individual children and groups, provided through mentoring, enhanced specialist provision and good partnership with parents is making a difference by enabling all groups to contribute fully and achieve highly.
- The voice of children is reflected strongly in the school environment, for example the many excellent displays showcase children's work, views and learning processes.

Areas for development

- Develop further the role of the school council as a representative body for the whole school.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the user voice 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

Mary Ryan
Her Majesty's Inspector