

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 March 2009

Mrs V Woods
Headteacher
St Andrew's CofE Aided Primary School
Townfield Lane
Lower Bebington
Wirral
Merseyside
CH63 7NL

Dear Mrs Woods

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 2 March 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: observations, learning walks, meeting the school council, lunchtime activities, discussions with pupils, staff, parents and governors and scrutiny of documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's strategic vision for user voice is developing effectively with strong commitment from all staff. The school actively promotes its use through pupil discussion groups which feed back to senior management.
- Pupils are involved in strategic decision-making and have participated in interviews for new staff, including the appointment of the headteacher. The school council is well established, elected democratically and reports back to the governing body once a year.
- A wide range of opportunities including circle time and the more flexible talking partners scheme, encourage pupils to express their views and opinions. They learn to be reflective and show confidence when expressing their views.
- The culture for pupils to contribute to decision-making and shape activities has impacted particularly on curriculum development. The focus on personalised learning, peer and self-reviews and 'question raising' to direct the creative curriculum has contributed to the school's drive to raise standards.

- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. The school's ethos promotes mutual respect and encompasses an extensive range of pupil responsibilities. As welcome teams, buddies, play leaders or duty monitors pupils build their self-esteem. At the Toast club, more able pupils of all ages tutor beginners at chess, whilst others eat breakfast or chat to community volunteers.
- The learning environment has been shaped by the pupil-designated behaviour zones. The climate for learning is influenced by the circle of friends, bully box and emotional temperature initiatives which impact positively on pupil personal development.
- The school's strongly nurturing environment is built around Christian values and very good knowledge of individual pupil needs and abilities. The school's Rainbow prayers support bereaved pupils to talk about their feelings, and Foundation Stage pupils learn to learn with their parents in the popular Family Works programme.
- Mentoring from the highly skilled teaching assistant team enables the school to provide a wide range of strategies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are heard. The Ginger Bear group supports pupils with autism and the Network Boys improve their literacy skills. The outreach dyslexia service has trained school mentors to support pupils with additional needs ensuring all may take an active part in school decision making.

Areas for development

- Ensure that the school development plan reflects the existing strong practice to formalise the user voice.
- Extend the roles and responsibilities of the new school council to develop greater autonomy.

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

Linda Clare
Additional Inspector