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17th November 2008

Paula Holden  
Family Learning Manager  
Dudley MBC

Dear Paula

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 14th November 2008. I am particularly grateful to you, all your staff, partners 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 the group of learners at Caslon Primary School, and to learn about their progress and achievements. It was good to hear about the qualifications they had achieved; the national recognition for their learning some of them had won, and the ways in which their families' lives had improved. They now contribute to many activities that support local children and their parents to engage in, and enjoy, learning.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made on this one-day visit included: interviews with staff, partners and learners and visits to partners' premises. A range of documentation, reports and data was reviewed.

The family learning provision I sampled during my one-day visit at Dudley Borough Council is 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:

- High retention and achievement rates in external qualifications
- Good development of personal, learning and parenting skills
- Good progression into vocational qualifications and voluntary work in the school/community
- Good initiatives to raise the profile of family learning and help promote community cohesion
- Very effective partnership working that widens participation, supports learners, informs curriculum development and establishes good links with local communities.

Area for further development

- The full implementation of the 'Dudley Parenting Support and Family Learning Strategy' to improve the sharing of information and wider work with families in the council

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

Susan Bain  
Her Majesty's Inspector