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22 February 2009

Anne Cassidy
Family Programmes Manager
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Civic Offices
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Dear Anne

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 during my visit on the 11th February 2009. 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. I really appreciated the enthusiasm of all involved in sharing the practice and outcomes of family learning activities in Portsmouth. 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 learners from Redwood Park School and to hear how family learning had helped them:

- *improve confidence*
- *join together in a range of creative activities*
- *share creative activities with their children in the art studio*
- *gain new skills*
- *prepare art work for an exhibition*
- *improve their interactive at home with their children*

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The evidence used to inform the judgements made on this one-day visit included: interviews with staff, learners and observations of a family learning session. I also reviewed a range of documentation, case studies, reports and your current data.

The family learning provision sampled (one session) during my one-day visit at Portsmouth City Council is outstanding. 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 effective strategic linking of family learning provision into local and regional priorities
- very good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- particularly effective consultation and recruitment strategies
- very effective partnerships to meet the needs of families at risk
- well developed systems for gathering a wide range of progression evidence
- very flexible provision to ensure effective literacy and numeracy outcomes

Areas for further development

- improve the operational team's confidence in the use of data

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

Penny Lamb
Additional Inspector