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Mr K Seed
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Seed

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) - three year longitudinal survey.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my recent visit on the 14 May to look at work in ESD in your school.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term. This was a follow up monitoring visit which was intended to assess the progress the school had made in developing ESD throughout the school since the previous visit.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of one lesson as well as work pupils had completed in creative media/music, visits to a number of classrooms and a survey of the school environment.

Since the last visit, the school has continued to develop and promote aspects of ESD throughout the school. The overall effectiveness in promoting sustainability is good with some aspects such as inclusion and the promotion of the global dimension being outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in ESD is good.

- The majority of pupils have a very good awareness of sustainability and the need to live more sustainable lifestyles. This is continually

reinforced through displays around the school and the frequent use of the outdoor environment in several subjects, notably geography.

- A smaller number of pupils have developed an excellent understanding of issues such as climate change or the ethical and moral issues linked to Fair-Trade and global poverty. This has encouraged a personal commitment to promoting a more sustainable lifestyle.
- The school is making good use of these pupils to champion and promote various aspects of sustainability around the school such as travel, waste and links with partner schools.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to work and grow vegetables and plants in the 'Quad' or on the allotments and appreciate the diversity they find. They understand the need to care and look after their environment and to reduce, re-use and recycle resources. They are also more aware of what is good food and its value.
- Practical activities promote pupils' personal development well. Most are confident when talking about the projects they are involved in whether it is about working at the 'Farmers' Market', growing tomatoes in the 'Quad' or constructing shelters using natural materials such as bamboo. They learn from working collaboratively and develop many of the social and practical skills that will help them when they leave school to enter the world of work.
- The focus on the care agenda linked to sustainability encourages pupils to be creative in their thinking and to explore sensitive issues such as feelings and emotions through the creative media of film and music for example. Some of this work is of a very high quality and the pupils' interpretation was very moving and thought provoking. Pupils are proud of what they can achieve.

Quality of teaching and learning of ESD

Insufficient ESD related lessons were observed to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in ESD. Pupils' learning is good in those subjects such as geography which have a curriculum which is strongly linked to promoting sustainability values. Pupils do however, benefit from the many real life and practical experiences offered. They like to solve practical problems whether it is how to stop the leak in a water tub or work out the most effective way to join bamboo stakes to form a secure shelter. Pupils feel they can solve problems if they see these as being relevant and improving their own skills.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good and outstanding in some aspects.

- Pupils benefit from the many opportunities to engage in practical work with the 'Quad' becoming an increasingly vibrant part of the curriculum offered. This area of the school is much improved and pupils are proud of their achievements both in helping to create it as well as maintain it.

- Learning for sustainability is addressed strongly, particularly in geography where there is a clear progression and focus in much of the work. Other subjects such as science and art also have an input and most subjects make a good contribution when there are themed weeks such as 'Enterprise week' for example.
- There is increased evidence for greater personalisation of learning. This has enabled more pupils to develop their interests and to engage more directly in their learning. For example, one pupil has shown a particular interest in the link with a school in Bangladesh to the extent that she has become keen to find out more. The responsibility given to share her findings on the school website has provided both an incentive and a sense of ownership.
- Very good use is being made of links with schools in contrasting localities. This is supporting understanding of other cultures and different places and is contributing to community cohesion and the global dimension. The link with the school in Bangladesh is developing well and the reciprocal visits with the Kobi Nazrul school in East London has captured the pupils' interest. They talk excitedly about their experiences and about their 'new buddies' in the partner school. Many pupils have suddenly realised that just a few miles up the road there is a completely different environment.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are good.

- The production of a sustainability policy and an action plan to continue to develop ESD throughout the school reflects the continued commitment of senior managers and governors to develop this as part of the care agenda for the school.
- Clear structures are being established to support and promote sustainability throughout the school. The 'geography and sustainability' website has the potential to become a very good management tool to encourage greater involvement and dissemination across more subjects.
- The use of ambassadors to promote the eight doorways of sustainability continues to maintain the high profile around the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to have ownership and the responsibility for an aspect and talk with real conviction about the need to recycle, save water, learn about other cultures and places etc.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The ethos of the school is inclusive. Pupils are treated as individuals but they also benefit from the many practical activities which allow them to work as part of a team.

- Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide very good support to ensure that personalised pathways for individual pupils are engaging their interests and looking after their specific needs.
- Relevant use is made of the outdoor and natural environment to engage with pupils who are at risk of being disaffected or absent. In many cases, pupils' self-esteem and their self-worth has been raised. There is good evidence to show improvements in both behaviour and attendance in most cases.
- Pupils are also appreciative of the very good support offered and have built up positive relationships with their support staff.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the need to engage across the whole curriculum to ensure that learning about sustainability becomes part of a whole school approach
- using the forthcoming changes to the secondary curriculum to plan for and make better links between subjects
- developing the sustainability website to involve more subjects and share and celebrate good practice
- continuing to develop the productive links with partner schools to bring learning about diversity and contrasting places to life.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, 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

Leszek Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools
Specialist Adviser for Geography and ESD