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Ms L Codling
Portswood Primary School
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Dear Ms Codling

Ofsted survey: good practice in the development of leadership skills and effectiveness

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 June 2009 to consider the work that you are doing to develop and sustain high quality leadership in your school and with a partner school in the same local authority.

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 my judgements included a visit to both Portswood and to a partner school. At both schools, I observed lessons, met senior and middle leaders and other staff, and met pupils. I undertook a scrutiny of documentation including the improvement planning for both schools.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's work to develop the skills and effectiveness of leaders is outstanding. Your innovative, high quality training for governors, senior and middle leaders has increased the leadership capacity within the school. As a consequence, you and other colleagues are able to support your partner school and other initiatives across the local authority.
- The role of the professional tutor within your own school, and within the partner school, brings a relentless focus on maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning. His work has had an excellent impact. In both schools, I observed outstanding lessons taught by teachers who, evidence demonstrates, have improved their teaching under his tutelage.

- Staff in your own school refer to a culture within which they trial, research and review strategies to improve teaching and learning.
- All staff interviewed spoke approvingly of the 'constant high expectations' of teaching and learning which permeate the school. Their professional satisfaction is high because of the trust placed in them by you and by the headteacher of the partner school.
- Senior leaders at the partner school value the support they have received with school self-evaluation. All staff spoke very positively of the support they have received to improve assessment for learning. There is clear evidence that teaching and learning at the partner school have improved as a result of the joint impact of its own work, and the work and support of staff from Portswood.
- Strong systems have been devised to secure and maintain good teaching and learning at the partner school. These systems are increasingly implemented consistently and are well understood by pupils who talked about what they were learning rather than what they were doing.

Area for development:

- the local authority should develop clear protocols for schools working in partnership.

Thank you again for your help with this survey. I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your work in this area.

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

Bradley Simmons
Her Majesty's Inspector