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Mrs E Bissell
Headteacher
Woodside Community School and Children's Centre
Highgate Road
Dudley
DY2 0SN

Dear Mrs Bissell

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 November 2009 to look at work in literacy.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: three lesson observations; discussions with you and your deputy headteacher; discussions with the coordinator for literacy and the access and inclusion manager; individual discussions with two groups of pupils and examination of some samples of work, individual education plans and progress books.

Features of good practice observed

- You and your deputy ensure a very strong and clear focus on pupils' entitlement to achieve the best they can. You and your staff are clearly determined to enable all pupils to reach or exceed national standards of attainment in literacy and, in particular, to narrow the attainment gap for those pupils who are most at risk of falling behind.
- The monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. The termly cohort conference promotes the importance of all pupils' development of literacy skills very effectively.
- The quality of teaching in literacy that I observed was of a high order. The emphasis given to speaking and listening makes a significant contribution to pupils' vocabulary and knowledge of syntax and grammar.
- The school places a premium on all pupils engaging with their writing. The choice of topics match pupils' interests and enthusiasms well. This makes

a significant contribution to the pupils' positive view of themselves as writers.

- The pupils, I met, spoke positively about how much they enjoy writing and they told me how they benefited from the numerous strategies used to develop their writing. They were quick to point out the emphasis given to acquiring well-developed skills of handwriting, spelling, letter formation and presentation. These skills were evident in the pupils' books and on displays.
- You ensure that pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties benefit from a well-coordinated extended schools team, bringing together a range of therapies and opportunities to access specialist services.
- The high-quality individual education plans support the progress of vulnerable pupils in literacy very well.

Areas for development

- We discussed the need to ensure a more consistent approach to marking pupils' English work to develop their understanding of how successful they have been at meeting their literacy targets and strengthen their ability to assess their own learning.
- We agreed that while the reporting arrangements to parents and carers provide sufficient opportunity to clarify how well individuals were making progress, a reference to any success in meeting previous targets in their end-of-year reports would add to the ethos of celebration.

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

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector