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23 October 2009

Mrs M Keeble  
Headteacher  
St Mary Magdalene CE Primary School  
48 Brayards Road  
London  
SE15 3RA

Dear Mrs Keeble

Ofsted survey inspection programme – the impact that links between parents/carers and schools have on supporting and encouraging young people's achievement, well-being and personal development

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 6 October 2009.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on how the school's work with parents and carers affects a range of outcomes for pupils.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff, individual and groups of parents, pupils, and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The overall effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers was judged to be good.

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is good.

- Parental attendance at events, such as assemblies, church services and social events in school is good. Parental attendance at meetings and workshops, held to show how parents might support their children's

learning, is more mixed. Some parents would like these to be held at different times.

- Attendance by parents at meetings to discuss their children's progress is high. In part, this is because the school seeks to accommodate parents' personal circumstances by providing a range of appointment times.
- Parents have a positive attitude to supporting their children's learning. Pupils spoke favourably of the many ways that their parents are involved in their learning at school and at home. A large number of parents support their children in completing homework, especially the extended, practical tasks that are much enjoyed by pupils and parents alike.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence is low as a result of the school's thorough systems for following up absence with parents.

The impact of the involvement of parents on the quality of provision

The impact of the involvement of parents on the quality of provision is good.

- Thorough induction procedures ensure that the school seeks information from parents about their children, including about their needs and interests, as they start school. The Reception class sustains this exchange of information effectively through individual 'interest books'.
- Curriculum information is readily available and this helps parents to share in their child's learning.
- The initial parental involvement in workshops, such as those on phonics, is not always sustained.
- Parents are aware of their child's targets and areas for development. The Reception class has involved parents in providing information that contributes to assessments of children's development.
- Some parents help regularly in school, for example by hearing children read. Individual teachers make effective use of parental expertise at times, but there is not a planned, coherent approach to involving parents in sharing their skills and knowledge as a resource for pupils' learning.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents is good.

- Parents are clear that communication is the key to a successful partnership. They appreciate the many opportunities for both informal and formal communication with staff who, they say, are always available.

Parents feel well informed about their child's needs and progress. Complaints are rare, but parents feel that issues are resolved quickly and to their satisfaction.

- Parents say that they chose this school for its Christian ethos and 'family' feel, as well as for its proximity to their home.
- A good range of methods, including the school website, email and text, is used to communicate with parents.
- The school seeks parents' views in a range of ways. General surveys, specific questionnaires, and evaluations of events enable the school to respond to parents' views.
- The Parents' Council is used effectively as a forum for sounding out parents' views on a range of issues. Appropriate plans are in place to extend this group, to formalise its function, and to make it more representative.
- The school development plan contains appropriate actions to improve engagement with parents, although the timeframe for some actions has slipped.
- The school has begun to analyse how parental involvement in specific programmes has had an impact on pupils' achievement or other outcomes.

#### The impact of parental involvement on inclusion

The impact of parental involvement on inclusion is outstanding.

- The school is successful in tapping into sources of funding to provide support to individual pupils who may need it. Examples include plans for the new nurture group and the new programme for supporting mathematics, which require a high commitment from parents.
- Staff have telling examples of how outcomes for individual pupils have improved through engagement with their parents, as well as through specific support.
- Strong links with external agencies help the school to provide programmes for individuals to raise their achievement, to improve their self-esteem and confidence, and to overcome barriers to learning.
- Partnership is strong with parents whose children have particular needs. Well-established systems ensure that parents are involved regularly in reviewing their child's progress and in setting new targets.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- making more use of parental skills and expertise to support pupils' learning
- implementing planned developments including extending the role of the Parents' Council
- developing systems for analysing the impact of parental involvement on pupils' outcomes.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the school's partnership with parents.

As I explained in my previous letter, 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

Jane Wotherspoon  
Her Majesty's Inspector