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Mrs J Jarrett
Principal
Haringey Sixth Form Centre
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Dear Mrs Jarrett

Ofsted 2009-10 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, students and parents and carers, during my visit on 18 and 19 November 2009.

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

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with parents and carers, students, parent governors and staff and scrutiny of relevant documentation. It also included observation of the centre at work during your open evening for prospective students and your graduation ceremony for students in the hospitality and catering faculty.

The overall effectiveness of the centre's engagement with parents and carers is good.

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is good.

- Parents are well-informed about students' progress through the regular reports which form part of the review process. Senior and personal tutors

follow up academic reviews with telephone calls when parents have been unable to attend. Many students benefit from the support of extended family members or tutors, offering guidance with coursework and homework projects.

- Parents appreciate close contact with personal and senior tutors provided through email, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings. Students say this helps improve attitudes to learning.
- The centre has worked particularly well with parents to help students improve their attendance and, in some instances, behaviour. Staff act quickly to tackle issues that arise. The warning notice system to students and parents is rigorously applied, with demonstrable impact in helping most students get back on track with their learning. Praise postcards sent to parents raise students' self-esteem.
- Vibrant newsletters inform parents of important dates, events and student success, and are greatly appreciated by students and parents.
- The centre is rightly proud of raising the aspirations of students and their parents by encouraging more applications to university. Good parental involvement in the entire application and support process is secured by the careers team who commit to out-of-hours work to visit families and make telephone calls at times most suited to parents.
- Parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are positive about the open-door policy which encourages good dialogue between staff and parents. Close working relationships with parents ensures smooth transition from local special schools. This effective partnership working ensures that students make good progress from entry and foundation level into Level 1 programmes. A few parents indicated that they would like targets to be more challenging to better reflect their aspirations for their sons and daughters.

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 satisfactory.

- A few parents contribute to curriculum projects, such as song writing and sound recording for a music course. Others take part in supporting enrichment activities, such as trips for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Persistent attempts by the centre to encourage greater parental involvement in other aspects of its work have proved less successful. Parental contribution to decision-making is, therefore, quite limited.
- Direct involvement of parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has helped secure a curriculum which is responsive to information and guidance from parents. This has helped create a clear link between learning at home and learning in the classroom.
- Work with outside agencies provides carefully targeted support for families.

- Strategies to respond to the needs of local families and parents as part of extended services are at an early stage of development. However, the strategic development plan includes clear action points for further consultation with community leaders and parents to determine the nature of extended provision.

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion is good.

- A strong commitment to inclusion is shared by the whole school community. Students with severe special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated with students studying mainstream courses. Cultural diversity is publicly celebrated through diversity days which bring parents, carers, students and extended family members together.
- The centre has an increasingly strong profile in the local community. During the open evening for prospective students, parents commented positively about the growing reputation of the centre for student success and a warm, inclusive environment it extends to all families.
- Despite extensive efforts by senior leaders, membership of a parent council does not yet have diverse representation of parent groups. However, parent and student governors are sharply focused on ways to maximise the representation of all groups through a new parent council.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

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

- The centre is keen to learn from the views of parents and you communicate this frequently to your staff, students and parents. In response to requests from parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the end-of-day collection area was redesigned to ensure better safety.
- Complaints from parents are fully investigated and documentation shows that communication with parents is effective in resolving issues.
- Through a sharp focus on the barriers to parental engagement, the leadership team have implemented effective systems for reaching parents who are isolated in the community. As a result, some parents have become more involved in the learning and progress of their child than before.
- The strategic development plan shows that senior leaders and the governing body continually evaluate and revise strategies for working with parents. For example, the low attendance at whole-centre events has led to some events being faculty-based and more successful.

- Parent governors are increasingly proactive in devising strategies to draw more parents into the life of the centre, such as the new governor and parent surgeries.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that development of electronic communication systems, such as the website and progress updates through a parental portal, are needed as a way of improving communication with some parents.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- further maximising the role of the parent governors to capture the views and ideas of more parents to inform decision-making and help shape the future direction of the centre
- continuing to develop strategies such as the parent council for involving a diverse range of parents in the life of the centre using the community links the centre is establishing
- finding ways to audit and use the expertise of parents to raise their involvement in provision at the centre.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the impact of the work of parents and carers in the centre.

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

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector