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Mr K B Cotgrave  
Headteacher  
Longfield School  
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Dear Mr Cotgrave

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, during my visit on 3 and 4 November 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 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. 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: interviews with staff, groups of parents, including parent governors, learners representing each year group, professionals from key agencies which support the work of the school; and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

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

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is outstanding.

- There has been a significant improvement in the school's academic standards. Students' achievement is well above average, including for

those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Levels of attendance have increased markedly, the rate of exclusions has declined sharply and the school has an impressive track record of successfully assimilating excluded students and those at risk of exclusion from other schools.

- Parents, carers and students contribute to this strongly by being fully involved with staff in appraising students' progress, setting revised targets and offering clear guidance about how to reach them. Parents and carers confirm that these procedures motivate students.
- Parents' and carers' attendance at the academic mentoring meetings to review students' progress, held twice a year, is very high and has increased significantly since revised arrangements were introduced. All parents and carers interviewed expressed high levels of satisfaction with the process.
- The personalisation of the curriculum for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective in meeting their needs and improving learning outcomes. You have strong and convincing evidence to show the link between greater parental engagement and improved student outcomes. However, some remain anecdotal and require greater precision.
- Students, parents and carers benefit greatly from the consistent support provided by the school. Parents and carers welcome the extended online access they will shortly have to students' work folders and performance information. However, they are uncertain about the rationale which underpins this strategy and, particularly, about the school's expectations of their role in this regard.

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.

- Induction procedures for students entering Year 7 are extremely thorough. Arrangements for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly strong. This leads to a very successful transition for all students and provides a secure platform for working with parents.
- Parental access to information for GCSE and post-16 options are also developed well. Parents and students are given very good access to information and expertise so that decisions about progression routes can be made securely. This includes excellent access to partner organisations, particularly for vulnerable students, their parents and carers, and those moving on to further education and training.

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion

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

- The school makes exemplary efforts to meet the needs of the most vulnerable students. This is most evident in the personalised nature of the curriculum, the level of pastoral guidance provided and the manner in

which their parents and carers are involved. This has engendered trust and confidence between the school and targeted families. It has also impacted markedly on their attendance, behaviour, attitudes, enthusiasm for learning and academic outcomes.

- The school has gone to extraordinary lengths to match provision to need and is working very effectively with a range of agencies to ensure this occurs.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

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

- Your strategy for engaging parents and carers as partners in their child's education has undergone a significant transformation. Strategic aims for engaging with parents are clear and ambitious and have high priority within the school's plans.
- Parents fully understand and support the school's policy for communication and engagement. They recognise that staff are always available and feel they are informed well about their children's progress and learning needs. Issues which arise are effectively dealt with.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- finding ways to ensure that staff, students, parents and carers fully understand the rationale and expectations which underpin the extended web access that will shortly give them student-level information
- finding ways to collate and formalise evidence you have about the impact of work with parents on students' learning.

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

Tom Grieveson  
Her Majesty's Inspector