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Mrs A Burtoft
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Dear Mrs Burtoft

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 29 and 30 September 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, governors, parents and learners; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of the school at work; and observing the progress of the 'Big Draw' special event.

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.

- Pupils' achievement is aided notably by the interest that parents show in their children's education and their understanding of the importance of their involvement.
- Staff and parents generally work well together to ensure that pupils' medical, emotional, physical and academic needs are appropriately accounted for, and this is facilitated by the school's open door policy.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly significant progress as a result of the close involvement the school has with parents and its continuing consultation with them.
- Some parents have undertaken family learning courses provided at the school. They speak highly of the additional confidence and knowledge gained as a result, enabling them to better help their children.

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.

- The school works well in partnership with a range of education and health professionals and has a flexible approach to meeting families' needs and taking account of their backgrounds.
- Staff consider the input of parents in curriculum planning and have identified in the school's development plan the necessity to continue to work at this. There is scope for this to become higher profile.
- The information-sharing sessions enable parents to help their children better by showing them the value of the activities and current teaching methodologies.
- Homework is not always consistently set across the school, nor does it always sufficiently provide for full parental involvement, including, for example, fathers and wider family members.
- Informal sessions for meeting with parents provide a valuable means of gaining information on existing or prospective pupils and to easing the transition into school.
- Pupils are mostly aware of their personal and academic targets and staff have identified the necessity to ensure these are shared more widely with parents and used better in parental consultations.

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion

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

- The school makes every effort to account for all aspects of pupils' needs and has done well in raising the achievement of those children experiencing difficulties.

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 school knows its pupils' families well and staff ensure they listen to their views, which influence school policy and practice. However, parents do not always know all aspects of school policy relevant to them.
- Staff are fully committed to working closely with parents and you successfully reach all parents by a wide range of means.
- The school provides a warm welcome to families from initial arrival and on an ongoing basis, including where families are of other than the Christian faith. This is very much part of the ethos of the school.
- Communication with parents is regular and is personalised according to their needs. The school provides equal levels of communication for parents not living full-time with their children.
- There is accurate self-evaluation of the school's partnership working with parents.
- There is careful consideration of the curriculum information that is distributed and its timing.
- The school receives very few parental concerns overall and generally manages to resolve these to parents' satisfaction.
- Staff and governors are aware of the necessity to update some of the school policies and sustain practices relating to parental involvement. there is a commitment to working closely with parents to ensure that the policies are relevant and known.
- The school development plan includes parental involvement but does not make the most of all opportunities to involve parents and carers in their children's learning. The school has not fully identified how sustained parental involvement could impact more widely on the quality of provision.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the school policies which include parents and carers accurately underpin school practice, are always shared regularly and are understood by parents and carers

- ensuring homework provides opportunities for full parental involvement and is consistent across the school
- giving parental involvement greater profile in the school's development plans to ensure it maximises all opportunities to involve parents and carers in their child's learning and fully considers how sustained parental involvement could impact more widely on the quality of provision.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop parental involvement in the school.

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 Melbourne
Her Majesty's Inspector