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Mrs E Gilpin
Headteacher
St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School
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Dear Mrs Gilpin

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, during my visits on 7 and 8 December 2009.

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

The visits 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 staff, parents and students and scrutiny of relevant documentation. I also attended the Year 12 parents' evening, an event for the parents of students who had participated in a self-esteem programme, and observed a care review meeting.

The overall effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding.

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is outstanding.

- Parents and students share strongly the Christian ethos of your school. They value highly the focus on developing 'fully alive' young people.
- Parents are highly committed to working in participation with your school; this contributes very strongly to improving outcomes for their children.

- Attendance at parents' evenings in all year groups is consistently high and parents appreciate the well-targeted information and celebration events that are offered.
- The 'Study Buddy' sessions, which show parents how to support their children, have been very effective in raising attainment.
- Parents and students say that communication between the school and home is regular and helpful. Where problems arise these are dealt with promptly. Consequently, many problems are resolved quickly.
- The use of email is developed well and used very effectively, notably in the sixth form. You plan to ensure that information about students' progress is available to all parents online and are exploring how improved systems can be used to make collecting parents' and carers' views even sharper.
- School planners are very effective and tailored well for different year groups, containing phase-specific information and guidance. Students say these are checked regularly.
- Parents say that transition arrangements from primary school and between Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, as well as the school's vertical tutor systems, are highly effective.

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 outstanding.

- The humanities specialism has been instrumental in driving a number of innovative developments. Parents are, for example, provided with training in how to make effective use of the 'Take Five' online study support materials. They comment very positively on the impact they have had on their children's attitude to revision.
- Parents say they feel empowered by opportunities such as the GCSE revision events which provide practical ways of becoming more closely involved in supporting their children.
- Your school also promotes thoughtfully focused intervention programmes for specific groups of students. Parents are kept well informed about these programmes and are involved in celebration events and presentations.
- The views of both parents and students were central to your school's decision to extend option choices during the last curriculum review.
- Parents have been very actively involved on a number of working parties, and in policy formation and monitoring.
- The involvement of parents and carers in supporting teaching and learning is good. Parents are frequently involved in assemblies, religious services and coordinate musical opportunities such as the Gospel Choir and orchestra. You recognise astutely that this area of work could be developed further so that parental expertise supports teaching and learning even more frequently.

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion

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

- Support for those students who are most vulnerable, such as the high number of looked-after children who attend your school, involves carers very effectively. They are able to participate in and contribute to those programmes designed to support them. Consequently, the young people make faster progress in terms of their achievement and well-being and achievement gaps are being narrowed effectively.
- Frequently, the support that parents receive is highly personalised and sensitive to their needs and circumstances.
- Your school has an excellent understanding of its local and wider community. It is sensitive to the changing intake and has innovated, notably in terms of its programmes to support minority ethnic students and through development of its Somali Ladies Group that provides ongoing support for parents and their families.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

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

- Parents, students and staff share a clear vision of what your school sets out to achieve.
- Working with parents and carers is integrated thoughtfully into your school's policies and strategic plans. Information from both formal and informal surveys of parental views and opinions is used incisively to inform regular monitoring and evaluation of your school's actions.
- Members of your senior leadership team have clearly defined roles which ensure that that work with parents and carers is targeted very well. Teachers and the wider workforce are trained well and have extensive routine positive contact with parents.
- The Friends of St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School group, and parent governors, play a very active role. Recent appointments have made the groups even more representative.
- Your school has reviewed its complaints procedure carefully so that it is even more effective and more easily accessible to parents. Complaints have reduced significantly over past three years and these are now few.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the use of online systems for sharing information about student progress with parents, in line with current school plans
- developing further, as appropriate, opportunities for parents to take an even more frequent role in teaching and learning.

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

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector