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Mrs F Burns  
Acting Headteacher  
All Saints CofE First School  
Fishers Mead  
Dulverton  
Somerset  
TA22 9EE

Dear Mrs Burns

Ofsted aspect survey – Raising aspirations and achievement: the power of partnership

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 5 and 6 October 2009, to look at your partnership with Exford Church of England Primary School and Dulverton Middle and Community School.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: brief visits to classes at All Saints and Exford First Schools; discussions with staff; and interviews with you, the headteacher of Dulverton Middle School, the senior teacher at Exford School, two governors and two representatives from the local authority. I also observed two mathematics lessons.

Features of good practice observed

- As temporary manager for the federation and acting headteacher of both first schools, you have made a promising start in leading the federation into its next phase. Working closely with the headteacher of the middle school and the governing body, you have developed a clear strategic plan for the future direction of the federation.
- The short term improvement plan for the federation is excellent. It identifies the urgent priorities necessary to improve teaching and learning across the federation in order to raise standards and achievement.

- The professional development plan for joint staff meetings and training is well conceived. Most staff value the new opportunities you are providing to share expertise and you have organised a comprehensive programme of visits to other schools to observe good practice.
- Staff representatives from all schools are working effectively to develop consistent approaches to teaching mathematics. The policy and guidelines in place are comprehensive. The good teaching I observed in mathematics in Years 1, 2 and 6 was a fitting testament to this work. Staff in the first schools are also working effectively to improve the teaching of letters and sounds. We agreed that monitoring of classroom practice by subject leaders to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on improved standards and achievement is underdeveloped.
- Pupils at All Saints First School are benefiting from specialist teaching by staff from Dulverton Middle School, particularly in French. The positive links you are establishing with the Children's Centre are appropriate to ensure a seamless transition for the children through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The successful themed music day you organised for all pupils in the federation was welcomed by the staff as it engendered a sense of community for the pupils and their parents and carers. Nonetheless, we agreed that opportunities for pupils in the federation to learn together on a regular basis are limited.
- The governors are determined to ensure the best interests of the pupils at all schools are at the heart of decision-making. They are acutely aware of the challenges facing the federation and are keen to move the planned developments forward at a swift pace. I note the federation has recently been successful in its bid for funding for a business manager.

#### Areas for development

- Create more opportunities for pupils across the federation to learn together.
- Ensure all staff are involved in the planned professional development opportunities in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all three schools.
- Explore ways for subject and senior leaders to develop their monitoring roles both within their own schools and across the federation.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop partnerships in support of school improvement.

As I explained previously, 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

Mary Harlow  
Her Majesty's Inspector