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Mr P Rubery
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rubery

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 visits on 16 and 17 November 2009. Please also extend my thanks to the parents and students with whom I spoke.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included interviews with parents, staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observations of the school at work.

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.

- You provide a great deal of useful information to parents and carers before and during their children's time in the school, including termly newsletters, a detailed prospectus and the comprehensive school website.

- Target-setting days provide parents and their children with a clear understanding of their progress and how to improve. Parents and students are effusive about the helpfulness of these events and attend in large numbers. Other events, including open days and the many student performances the school delivers through its performing arts specialism, are attended similarly well.
- The flow of specific information from school to home is very strong. It encompasses letters, emails, telephone calls and postcards. Parents feel they can contact the school easily and say they receive helpful responses quickly.
- Students' progress is monitored assiduously and parents are quickly informed of any problems with attendance, behaviour, effort or attainment. Similarly, where things are going well, the school is quick to congratulate. Parents talk of the positive messages their children receive on effort grades and the boost it has given to the students' motivation, resulting in very good behaviour and academic outcomes.
- Day-to-day procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are very thorough.
- The well-organised school website engages parents effectively in the routines of the school. It has further potential to engage parents in their children's progress with the launch of a parental gateway. Initial feedback from parents piloting this facility has been very positive. Clearly, this development is not as useful for the few families without ready access to computers.

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.

- The governors have established a parents' committee with a specific role in assessing school policy formation. Other parents are consulted about school initiatives either by questionnaire or informally. Their feedback is taken seriously and, where appropriate, acted upon.
- Homework is set regularly and students and their parents report that tasks are appropriate. Parents say that, where they can, they assist their children but that their main role is in ensuring tasks are conscientiously completed.
- Parents are informed about the assessments made of their children very well and contribute helpfully to discussions about progress and targets.
- There are several examples of parents contributing their expertise or time to the school to enhance the curriculum and learning, particularly through the school's specialist arts status. This has not been a strategic priority of the school and so is relatively underdeveloped in comparison with other aspects of the school's work with parents.
- The Fallibroome Learning Community is a close working relationship between the school and its main feeder primary schools. This facilitates

excellent transition between primary and secondary education for parents and their children.

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion

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

- This is a very inclusive school. Parents and carers of potentially vulnerable students are supported exceptionally well by pastoral, academic and special educational needs and/or disabilities teams. They speak enthusiastically about the way their children are integrated into school life and helped to achieve their best. As a result, students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities progress even faster than their peers.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

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

- Leaders and managers have parental partnership as an essential part in their work. There is, however, no overarching statement or policy about it.
- The vital role of parents and carers is mentioned positively several times within the school improvement plan. Parents underpin and are implicit in everything the school does.
- Governors share your view of the importance of parental involvement and parent-governors are actively involved in reviewing school policies and initiatives through their innovative parents' committee. They agree that they could have a more explicit role in planning for the development of parental expertise.
- The school's very well-embedded inclusive approach to doing the best for its students and their families is very successful in engaging all parents and carers well, including those who are hard to reach. The school is very welcoming for parents, as demonstrated by their excellent attendance at school events.
- Parents could find little fault with the school's communication. Any concerns or complaints they wish to raise are dealt with very well through informal and other channels. Customer service is a real strength of the school.

An area for improvement, which we discussed, is:

- developing the use of the extensive parental expertise to enhance further the provision for students in the school.

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

Peter Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector