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Mrs A Clayton  
Headteacher  
Coton-in-the-Elms CofE Primary School  
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Swadlincote  
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Dear Mrs Clayton

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, parents and pupils, during my visit on 10 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 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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of the school at work; and an analysis of some of the pupils' 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.

- Your induction arrangements work very well. You have close links with the local pre-school where early relationships with parents are established and high-quality information for new parents through the welcome booklet and welcome meeting contribute much.
- You work hard to prepare pupils and their parents for transition between the classes and do so effectively. Consequently, expectations are clear and pupils make the adjustments more readily, with well-targeted support

from their parents and carers. The momentum of learning continues and time is not lost.

- You undertake imaginative ways of setting homework where Key Stage 2 children can interpret challenges given in individual ways, often working with their parents or carers. This has a very positive influence on pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning.
- The school often considers parental involvement in specific sessions or projects through long-term planning, but is not yet doing this systematically. Parents' and carers' awareness of what their children are learning is, therefore, better at certain times than others.

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.

- Through regular discussions and meetings, parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are involved thoroughly in the setting of smart targets in their individual education plans. Parents work closely in partnership with other professionals to ensure their children's needs are appropriately met.
- High-quality curriculum information for parents and carers prepares them well to support their child's learning.
- Some parents are directly involved in running out-of-school clubs and extra-curricular activities, such as cycling proficiency, gardening and football. Many parent volunteers also enhance the capacity for arts, crafts, special topics and developing pupils' reading skills.
- The school tries to include grandparents wherever possible and to good effect.
- Despite much excellent practice, you acknowledge that parental expertise is not always fully exploited as a resource for learning and in the curriculum.
- Parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are continually sharing what they know and contributing to the process of assessment. However, this does not always happen as effectively or routinely in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion

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

- Staff provide a warm welcome and support to all families. This is especially appreciated by those families that transfer to the school during the academic year and those families from the traveller community.
- The more visible presence of staff on the school yard has improved relationships and communication, meaning that concerns can be dealt with effectively.

- You work exceptionally closely with the parents of children with behavioural needs and special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that their needs are thoroughly accounted for and they make the best progress possible.
- You also work proactively with other external partners for the benefit of parents and children.
- The school liaises closely with parents in acquiring statements of special educational need for their children. You provide specialist support to pupils on the basis of their individual assessments.
- You acknowledge that all children learn in different ways and help parents to understand the way in which homework can be undertaken flexibly to embrace this.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

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

- The school consults with parents and carers regularly and takes parental views very seriously, taking action where appropriate.
- Parents not living in the family home are accounted for so that they receive the same high-quality information about the school and about their child as other parents and they can be as involved as they choose to be.
- The school is continuing to identify effective strategies for engaging parents and carers in their children's learning and development through undertaking a quality standard award in leading parental partnership.
- There is an established Parent Council which fulfils an extremely useful function, enabling parents and carers to be actively involved in the life of the school and their children's learning.
- Events such as the 'Happy Children Event', raises parental awareness of the emotional well-being of their children.
- In some school documentation, the current parents' and carers' entitlement is clear. The school acknowledges that it is not fully incorporated across all documentation and, therefore, does not accurately reflect the school's current outstanding practice in this area. Future aims in relation to parents and carers are not explicit in the school's vision statement and development plan.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making parents' and carers' entitlement clear across all documentation and incorporating current practice and future aims explicitly in the school's vision statement and development plan
- continuing to consider parental involvement in specific sessions or projects through long-term planning, including using parental expertise even more extensively and imaginatively as a resource

- ensuring that parents and carers are regularly sharing what they know and contributing to the process of assessment for learning in Key Stages 1 and 2.

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

Jane Melbourne  
Her Majesty's Inspector