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Mr P Grice
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Grice

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 visit on 2 March 2010 to look at the impact that links between parents/carers and schools have on supporting and encouraging young people's achievement, well-being and personal development.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the aspect, 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 staff, groups of parents, including parent-governors, and students representing each year group; telephone conversations with professionals from key agencies which support the work of the school; and a scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents/carers and its impact on the outcomes for children is outstanding.

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is outstanding.

- The school provides convincing evidence that the exceptionally high levels of engagement with parents and carers contributes strongly to improving student outcomes and significantly above average attainment.
- Attendance by parents and students at the thrice yearly academic mentoring meetings has increased markedly since revised arrangements were introduced in the last few years and is now well over 90%. These events contribute very effectively to parents' capacity to support students' learning and progress.
- Parents are fully involved in appraising students' progress and setting revised targets, reflecting the significant value placed on home-school partnership working.
- The school's strategy to work closely with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed exceptionally well and is successful in promoting students' achievement. The school is yet to use the experience and knowledge gained by the parents of these students when practice and policy are reviewed.

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of provision

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of provision is good.

- Transition arrangements for the transfer of students from primary schools and for Year 11 students seeking access to further education, training or the world of work are very effective in supporting students to make well-informed choices about their future study and career options.
- The school makes some use of the knowledge and expertise of parents to support students' learning and the curriculum, but this is not widespread. Senior leaders recognise the value in undertaking an audit of parents' knowledge and expertise to better understand the range of support which could be shared.

The impact of the parental involvement on inclusion

The impact of the parental involvement on inclusion is outstanding.

- The school is highly inclusive. Efforts to meet the needs of all students and families are exemplary and outcomes for all groups are well above average.
- The school works very effectively with agencies to support the needs of the most vulnerable students and their families, including those making managed moves from other schools. This successfully underpins their learning and integration into school life and in this the school has a strong track record.
- The provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective because the school takes the time to understand the needs of these students and their families very well and to map provision accordingly. This involves very close working and consultation with parents and support agencies so that progress can be

monitored carefully. Partnership working with these families is particularly strong.

- The fulsome support and engagement of parents in the school's behaviour for learning policy has resulted in a marked impact on students' behaviour, a significant reduction in exclusions and a consistent rise in attendance and punctuality. There have been no permanent exclusions.

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's strategy for engaging parents in supporting their children's learning is an exceptionally strong feature of its work.
- School policy, and the value it places on the engagement of parents in students' learning, is well considered and ambitious.
- The review of the school's behaviour strategy provides evidence of how parents' views are valued and used to shape policy and practice.
- Particularly effective work is contributing to the successful integration of vulnerable students.
- Parents confirm their understanding of the school's strategy for engaging with them and are fully supportive of its efforts. They recognise that the school goes to extraordinary lengths to be fully inclusive and strives hard to meet the needs of all students and families.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using the expertise and experiences gained by parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to support the ongoing development of policy and practice in this area
- undertaking a skills audit so that the school better understands the expertise and knowledge which parents can offer to support the curriculum.

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 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

Tom Grieveson
Her Majesty's Inspector