

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr R Foreman  
Headteacher  
Carleton Community High School  
Green Lane  
Carleton  
Pontefract  
West Yorkshire  
WF8 3NW

Dear Mr Foreman

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 1 November 2006 to look at work in ESD.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with pupils, teachers and other staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of ESD was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards in ESD are satisfactory overall.

- Evidence from written work in science, PHSCE and geography indicates that pupils are reaching broadly expected standards. In both key stages, in design technology courses which reflect aspects of the sustainability agenda, pupils reach better than expected standards and achieve well.
- In lessons seen in design technology and science, pupils were making good progress in understanding, for example, the importance of waste avoidance and energy saving in product design.

- Pupils' understanding of and involvement in relevant whole school issues such as recycling are limited.
- Pupils' personal development in relation to the sustainability agenda is good overall. They respond well to the good range of opportunities provided for them to take responsibility and show initiative, for example through involvement in the School Council, by acting as school "Ambassadors" or through participation in projects and activities in the community outside school.
- Their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is evident in the numbers participating in extra-curricular sport, their growing support for the school's efforts to encourage healthy eating habits and the positive response to the recently introduced travel plan.
- A small, but significant group of pupils, are involved in contacts promoting mutual understanding with pupils from a partner school in Japan.

#### Quality of teaching and learning of subject

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

- The school's philosophy for teaching and learning is sympathetic to the principles of ESD. This is strongly reflected in relevant policies and practice in science and design technology but not evident consistently across all subject areas.
- During the visit good teaching was observed in science and design technology. Learning was matched to pupil' preferred learning styles, provided opportunities for group work, made effective use of digital technology and ensured that pupils were able to check their progress against stated lesson objectives.

#### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for ESD is satisfactory.

- Relevant aspects of the sustainability agenda are evident in expected curriculum areas for example design technology, science, PHSCE and geography.
- A sound range of extension and extra-curricular activities encourage pupils' interests and learning in aspects of the sustainability agenda and promote the development of their creativity.
- There is a strong focus on health related issues both in curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

#### Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management of ESD are satisfactory.

- The school has been quick to seize the opportunity presented by its inclusion in this survey to make an accurate evaluation of the strengths

and weaknesses in its provision for ESD and begin the process of integrating ESD into its strategic planning.

- There is sympathetic support for individual teachers keen to develop projects which reflect elements of the sustainability agenda.
- Opportunities made available through the school's specialist science college status are being used to promote aspects of the sustainability agenda.
- The school canvasses and is prepared to act on the views of all stakeholders including those of the local community. This contributed to the creation of a high quality travel plan for the school which also benefited from substantial professional support provided by the Local Authority.
- Effective liaison with its caterers has resulted in the successful introduction of health conscious menus which compliment the school's good approaches to the promotion of healthy lifestyles through the curriculum.
- The school is strongly committed to providing academic and social support for young people and adults in its local community.

## Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is good overall.

- The Every Child Matters agenda underpins much of the school's work with pupils.
- All pupils are encouraged to take part in the range of activities offered by the school which reflect the sustainability agenda.
- Focus on the needs of vulnerable pupils, for example in ensuring that they are effectively prepared for life in a secondary school and supported in transition into post 16 courses, training or the world of work, contributes to their personal development and academic achievement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- building on the school's accurate initial evaluation by embedding provision for ESD into its strategic planning
- making sure that responsibilities for further development of ESD are clearly identified and that progress towards agreed targets is carefully monitored.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/Local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Pearson  
Additional Inspector