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Dear Mr Burke

Ofsted Survey Inspection Programme – The degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement in children and young people's education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, parents and pupils, during my visit on 12 December 2006 to look at the degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement in children's education.

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 staff, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of parents reading with children or assisting activities. The judgements are specifically in relation to the degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement under the following headings.

The overall effectiveness of the degree and effectiveness of parent and carer involvement in children's education was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards including personal development

The impact of parental and carer involvement on achievement, standards and personal development is outstanding.

- The close liaison between home and school and the commitment of parents and carers to their child's education mean that most pupils make at least

good progress. The school has effective methods for ensuring it responds to pupils who are not doing as well as they should and provides additional appropriate support for these pupils.

- The overwhelming majority of parents support their children at home with their work. The children know that this support really helps them to improve and make progress in achieving their targets.
- The school has improved its results and in 2006. Although the school fell short of meeting the local authority targets, the results were above national average for all the core subjects. The current methods of monitoring and intervention ensure that the school directly addresses pupils' needs and enables them to achieve their potential. It believes that is on course to improve results further in 2007.
- The school works effectively with parents to promote pupils' personal development and well-being, for example in raising pupils' self-confidence by the direct involvement of their parents.
- Attendance is monitored closely and the school has effectively improved attendance.

Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

The impact of parent and carer involvement in these areas is outstanding.

- Excellent relationships impact positively on pupils' learning. The clearly planned induction process helps pupils to settle easily and parents to understand the school's expectations.
- Parents are provided with a good range of information about their child's progress and there is good attendance at meetings relating to this. Parents feel well informed of their children's targets and help them to achieve these. Parents demonstrate commitment to their children's all round success.
- All pupils are very well supported in school by effective use of learning partners and by a range of adults, including senior management, an inclusion manager, teaching assistants and many parents.
- Parental help in lessons effectively supports pupils' reading, technology skills, their personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school gives a high level of support to parents of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including arrangements for transfer to junior school. There are strong links between staff at both schools.

Quality of the curriculum

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The establishment of secure, trusting relationships with parents when they first join the school is a key priority. This enables an ongoing dialogue between home and school to be established. As a result of such positive parental engagement, the vast majority of pupils receive very good support from home in developing early reading and writing skills.
- Parents feel very well informed about their children's learning, enabling them to fully support their children in all aspects of the curriculum. They are given additional ideas for further supporting their child's learning at home through good quality information sheets.
- Parents contribute significantly to the enhancement of the curriculum, for example by supporting science week, various design and technology projects and running after school activities, workshops and clubs. The school is therefore able to utilise the skills and knowledge of parents to improve the learning experiences for all pupils.
- A number of parents are teaching assistants at the school. The school has also supported parents in their progress to following careers in teaching or returning to teaching. This important model demonstrates to pupils that learning is a lifelong process.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to parents joining in with many special events such as school fairs, plays, sports day, family picnics and discos.

Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are outstanding.

- Parental involvement clearly underpins the work of this successful community school where every child really is important. Parents genuinely want to be involved because of the positive atmosphere and because the school makes its expectations for partnership clear, explaining the importance and impact of their involvement.
- A broad range of formal and informal methods is used to engage parents in the life of the school and in their children's learning. Through careful monitoring, staff are aware of those groups or individuals who have difficulty in engaging with school and then encourage them to be involved.
- Parents' views are taken seriously. The school is responsive and is swift to follow up any concerns.
- Parents are well represented on the governing body and there is a very effective parent and teacher association which makes a real impact on the quality of school life.
- A family support worker attached to the school helps to bridge the gap between home and school and offers impartial advice on a range of education and family matters. They are also able to support parents with outside agencies in order to best meet the needs of their pupils.

- A welfare assistant contributes to effective channels of communication between home and school. This is valued by parents. There are also parent representatives for every class.
- The integral nature of parent and carer involvement is demonstrated by the fact that parents are involved in almost every aspect of school life.
- All documentation is regularly reviewed and updated. As yet the school does not have a specific parental involvement policy outlining all the very good work it does in this respect.
- Practice in parental involvement is firmly embedded and planning for this is incorporated into the School Development Plan. The school is not complacent about its role to continually raise attainment and further improve outcomes for all pupils. Senior management and governors review and evaluate parental involvement as part of whole school improvement.

Inclusion

The impact of parent and carer involvement on inclusion is outstanding.

- This truly inclusive school works hard to identify pupils' needs as soon as possible and it works closely with parents, particularly the parents of children with learning difficulties and disabilities or who occasionally require additional support from time to time.
- Priority is given to listening to parents and to supporting their needs. For example, the family support worker gives priority to meeting parents in order to support any family issues. An inclusion manager also liaises with families very closely. Teaching staff are always happy to talk to parents about concerns connected to pupils' progress and how they might best help their child at home.
- The school closely monitors all pupils and their progress. It also very effectively monitors pupils' work and the marking of it.
- All families are included in the activities offered and many cultures are represented at the school through a relevant curriculum and a range of celebrations throughout the year.

There were no significant areas for development, but two areas for continued improvement, which we discussed, were:

- ensuring that the school retains its existing commitment to parental partnership and seeks to maintain current outstanding practices
- consider having an accessible written policy which underpins the work of the school in terms of parental partnership.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop parental involvement further in conjunction with raising attainment and improving outcomes for children.

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