

29 January 2007

Mr Ian Newman  
Headteacher  
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London  
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Dear Mr Newman

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 17 January 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. 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 good.

Achievement and standards including personal development

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

- The school's analysis of its results and performance is accurate and it has identified clearly those students whose performance it needs to improve, for example some girls and some pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Involving parents in this is a key element of the strategy to raise achievement.

- Most groups of pupils make satisfactory progress. Black and minority ethnic pupils make good progress and their attainment is slightly higher than the majority of the pupils. The pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
- The school works well with vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The number of these pupils is higher than average and the range of their learning difficulties and impairments is wide.
- The Access Centre effectively supports pupils who are within the autistic spectrum and meets parents regularly, many on a daily basis. Pupils receive the same or similar types of opportunities as their peers in the school, for example the music programme with the Salvation Army the relaxation course and the alternative PE programme.
- Induction arrangements to settle new pupils into the school are successful, especially so for those pupils with special educational needs.
- The school works well with parents to promote the personal development and well-being of all the pupils.
- There are very effective behaviour monitoring and improvement strategies, using rewards and sanctions appropriately. The use of Pastoral Academic Liaison (PAL) forms is very effective in motivating the pupils and challenging unacceptable behaviour. The school has sound plans to develop these electronically (E-PALs) so that parents and students can view them at home.
- The school is very responsive to parents' concerns. Parents report that contact is good and that the staff respond quickly to their concerns and phone calls.
- The school involves parents well in trying to ensure that the pupils attend regularly and are punctual to school and lessons. Attendance is currently at 92.3%.
- The range of measures to support the pupils and avoid and reduce exclusions is good.
- Target setting for pupils is effective because it involves both the parents and the pupils in agreeing appropriate targets.

### Quality of teaching and learning including assessment, support and guidance

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

- Information sent to parents is clear and regular; for example newsletters and events guides are well received. Details about option choices and courses are also clear and helpful, for example the Pathways process and booklet.
- There are many meetings for parents depending on the cycle and appropriateness; parents consider these meetings to be helpful in involving them and keeping them informed.
- The staff use the Home/School Agreement effectively to reinforce school expectations; referring to it when communicating with parents makes it a live document.

- The achievements of the pupils are celebrated positively and recognised in assemblies, in displays and through the merits system.
- The information given to the parents on courses and examinations is helpful. Useful information is also provided to parents on how they can help the pupils improve as part of reporting target grades.
- The mentoring system is well developed and used successfully, involving prompt feedback and review of each pupil's progress.

## Quality of the curriculum

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

- There are good, established links with local further education colleges for progression routes for most of the pupils.
- Parents are appropriately informed of curriculum changes and developments and the governors' curriculum committee is active in reviewing curricular activities. However, involvement of parents in planning curriculum changes has been limited up to now.
- There is a good range of trips, extra curricular and sports activities to enhance the curriculum. The parents are effectively consulted to ensure that the pupils are able to participate. An example is how the sports department took extra training to enable a pupil with particular needs to participate in a sports trip abroad to represent the school.

## Leadership and management of parent and carer involvement

Leadership and management in relation to parental involvement are good.

- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide a clear lead in ensuring that parents are welcomed as partners and their views are properly considered.
- The staff within the pastoral structures and house system share the vision of building effective parental engagement.
- Parents feel genuinely engaged due to the responsive and effective range of communication strategies, meetings and events. For example, the focus meetings with parents initiated by the headteacher are effective, though formal questionnaires are not used.
- The school development plan has detail on working with parents but would benefit from more specific targets.
- Leadership and management of support areas are good, with well developed support mechanisms.
- Senior leaders set high expectations; the parents feel that the school is a "genuine listening school" with a strong ethos of rewards and commendations.

## Inclusion

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

- The staff work hard to involve all the parents in the life of the school.
- The needs of the pupils are identified early and appropriate support is provided through the school or through its links with external agencies. The school tries to ensure that all pupils can participate in trips and activities regardless of ability or disability.
- Specialist provision, for example the Access Centre and the Prevention of Exclusion and Activity Team are effective in ensuring that the pupils progress and achieve at least in line with their ability or aptitude. Their supervision of vulnerable pupils at breaks and lunchtime is good.
- Bullying is challenged effectively and the pupils feel safe and state that they can report any incidents confident that matters will be dealt with appropriately and swiftly. Parents are fully informed about incidents.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- involving parents more closely in planning changes and in curriculum developments
- conducting more formal evaluations of parental views and ensuring that the section in the school development plan has more specific targets
- hastening the planned development of the e-PALs.

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

Peter Green  
Her Majesty's Inspector