

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



15 October 2008

Mrs J Bullous
Headteacher
Mary Howard CofE (VC) Primary School
School Lane
Edingale
Tamworth
B79 9JJ

Dear Mrs Bullous

Ofsted survey inspection programme – New models of school leadership: influences and outcomes

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of staff, governors and pupils, during my visit on 14 October 2008 to evaluate the impact of new models of leadership on school improvement.

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 discussions with the local authority, governors, staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and lesson observations.

The overall effectiveness of the model of leadership, a federation with another primary school, is good.

The impact of the model of leadership on achievement and standards is good.

- Standards continue to be above the level expected at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. A greater proportion of pupils in Year 6 are working towards attaining Level 5 than at the time of the last inspection.
- Pupils of all abilities are making better progress and achieving more because of improved teaching and rigorous tracking. Progress is particularly strong in reading with the introduction of guided reading making a positive difference.
- Standards in writing are rising rapidly, especially those attained by boys. The sharing of excellent practice within the federation has contributed to these improvements.
- Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT), flagged as an area for improvement by the last inspection, are strengthening as a result of specialist teaching and the sharing of

resources within the federation. For example, the use of digital cameras is assisting the review of work in literacy through drama.

- Pupils' personal and social development benefits greatly from opportunities to share experiences more widely within the federation. Pupils say, 'The joint sports day was brilliant as we got to compete against lots of new friends.'

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- High expectations, teachers' willingness to improve their practice and the sharing of expertise amongst colleagues within the federation have raised the quality of teaching and learning in the core subjects from a satisfactory to a securely good base.
- Assessment practice has improved because of the opportunities for teachers from both schools to meet and evaluate pupils' work together.
- The introduction and development of a unified system for tracking pupils' progress across the federation means teachers can better support pupils in achieving their targets. However, there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to review how well they are doing.
- Additional teaching support is used effectively. Some teaching assistants work in both schools and this continuity gives additional security to the most vulnerable learners.

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- Staff from both schools plan together in English and mathematics to ensure consistency and continuity in pupils' curricular experiences.
- Staff, parents and pupils all highlight how much richer the curriculum is now that the schools are working collaboratively and sharing facilities. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils from both schools worked in teams to consider the pros and cons of trade between different countries.
- Collaboration between the schools in the federation is leading to a reduction in costs and significant savings which are invested in enriching pupils' experiences. For example, jointly organised school trips enable pupils to enjoy visits to places further afield.
- Pupils benefit from the increased range of extra activities across the federation.

The impact of the new model of leadership on the quality of leadership and management throughout the school is good.

- The process of school improvement planning and monitoring has been dovetailed across the two schools. This enables school leaders and governors to work through the strengths of the schools and tackle areas for development together.
- The quality and impact of the staff development programme is a very positive feature that is contributing to continuous improvement.

- The roles and responsibilities of staff have been clarified with more work to do in sharing expertise to develop monitoring further and build good leadership capacity at all levels.
- There has been good improvement of the learning environment and increased efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The impact of the new model of leadership on inclusion is outstanding.

- Accurate and early assessment of pupils' needs and capabilities together with the strong emphasis placed on ensuring pupils' social and emotional well-being results in all learners achieving well.
- Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn successfully as a result of tailor-made programmes of work.
- Those pupils with gifts and/or talents develop their aptitudes well as a result of the opportunities provided.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- giving pupils regular opportunities to review their targets and clarify their next steps forward
- widening the opportunities for those with leadership roles to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of your school and the federation.

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

Christine Field
Additional Inspector