

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



02 February 2009

Mrs S Lanni
Headteacher
Villiers Junior and Infant School
Prouds Lane
Bilston
West Midlands
WV14 6PR

Dear Mrs Lanni

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 January 2009 to look at work in promoting equality.

The visit provided valuable information that 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included discussions with key members of staff and pupils, various types of support work, the observation of two complete lessons and three sessions of performing arts activities.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The ethos of the school has been carefully built around respect and high expectations for all. This is accepted by all members of the school community, so that pupils are treated as individuals and given the specific support they need. As a result, progress is good and sometimes outstanding for the vulnerable pupils in the school.
- On entry to school, systems are in place which allow pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be identified early. As a consequence of this, together with the effective intervention systems used, these pupils are able to access excellent support during their time in school.
- The school has created its own tracking system, which is able to monitor groups of pupils according to their background or needs. This system also allows pupils to be monitored either individually or in groups. This monitoring ensures that any

pupils who are at risk of underachieving or who have a learning difficulty and/or disability receive early intervention and are able to make good and often outstanding progress in their learning.

- Through robust monitoring of the school's training needs, the continuing professional development co-ordinator is able to provide training which ensures that the skills of individual members of staff are maximised so that vulnerable pupils receive effective support during their lessons.
- The use of small support groups throughout the school ensures that pupils who are vulnerable receive intervention according to their individual needs. These groups are well planned to allow a balance of individualised support and access to whole-class work. The school is using the 'every child counts' intervention programme to target individual pupils who are at risk of underachievement in maths. Their progress over a twelve week period is closely monitored and support is targeted where it is most needed. As a recent innovation, it is too early to yet monitor the full impact of this scheme, but early indicators are that pupils start to close the gap with their peers.
- Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school and they appreciate the learning opportunities available to all pupils, both within and outside of the curriculum. There is also good attendance at parents' classes provided by the school. This helps parents to understand how their children are taught and enables them to be more effective in their support at home.
- The school emphasises the contribution of all pupils to the life of the school and provides a wide range of opportunities for them to develop their creativity in all areas. The school appreciates and values the experiences that pupils bring to the school and celebrates their participation in the school in a way, which raises the self-esteem and confidence of all pupils. As a result of this, and the individualised support provided in lessons, many pupils have overcome very low standards on entry to the school and leave with standards which are broadly average, indicating outstanding progress in many cases.
- The school has a strong emphasis on promoting performing arts and sports and this has had the effect of raising the level of self esteem and self confidence amongst the pupils, significantly. This is particularly helpful for pupils who might otherwise have become disengaged from education. The pupils regularly perform in public arenas, such as the Mayor's service and the Remembrance Day activities and have gained an extremely positive reputation in the local community. These activities are fully inclusive and all pupils are encouraged to participate.
- There is a culture of high expectations which includes all pupils without exception. For example, pupils from Year 4 onwards are expected to learn a musical instrument and contribute to the ethos of high achievement in performing arts. All pupils undertake a weekly swimming lesson and work towards appropriate awards. This culture raises the aspirations of some pupils who might otherwise not have participated, and develops their confidence, self

discipline and self esteem. A strong traditional ethos also applies to high expectations for all with regard to behaviour and overall achievement.

- The school provides a wide range of services for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Support is also provided for families ensuring that families who would not normally engage with the day to day life of the school or their childrens' education are provided with excellent intervention to help them effectively support their children and to feel a part of the school community. A strong example of this is the ICT classes which are attended by both children and parents, who are expected to work together to develop their skills in this area.
- Inclusion in Villiers School is outstanding. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds take a full and active part in school activities. The school promotes a strong feeling of community and belonging and this is reflected in the excellent behaviour of the pupils. Staff know the pupils well and this allows them to consistently meet their needs very well. Pupils say that there are many ways that they are supported within the school. The range and quality of support available, enables vulnerable pupils to concentrate on their work and to make at least good progress during their time in the school.
- The care, guidance and support for vulnerable groups have an outstanding impact on improving their personal development. The school's inclusive ethos promotes an exemplary tolerance and understanding of other cultures. Behaviour systems, founded on a house system and the importance of positive relationships, enable pupils to exhibit outstanding behaviour. Because pupils have a clear understanding of acceptable boundaries, all pupils, including those who might be at risk of disengagement, are in a position to progress well with their learning and social development. The community spirit in the school ensures that pupils are very supportive of each other ensuring that those who are at risk of social isolation are fully included in the life of the school.

Areas for development

- To continue to devise ways to support parents and empower them to actively support their children's education.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to promote equalities in the school.

A copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some

schools by telephone after several months in order for us to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector