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27 January 2009

Mrs M Turner
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Turner

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on the 27 January 2009, to look at work in promoting equality.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: observing lessons, scrutinising school documentation, discussions with parents, pupils, teachers, managers, governors and other professionals who provide additional support to the pupils in the school.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is good.

Features of good practice observed

- You hold high expectations for pupil achievement and set an ethos where all pupils are encouraged to do their best. Staff share this vision and as a consequence, by age 11, most pupils have reached standards that are in line with the national average. The achievement of some pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above that found nationally.
- The school offers an outstanding level of support to families who are experiencing emotional difficulties. It organises multi-agency meetings quickly to ensure that all agencies supporting children's welfare are involved in finding realistic solutions to problems. A team of highly skilled learning mentors work effectively with children and families. They run parenting classes which parents say are invaluable in helping them to model effective parenting skills to their children. Parents report that as a consequence their children are better behaved at home and at school. Some parents are keen to pursue qualifications in this aspect and are ready to act

as facilitators to other families. Other parents report that they have been given the confidence by such classes to return to college to gain qualifications.

- The children's centre, which is run by the governing body of the school, provides a wealth of courses and excellent opportunities to support family learning and promote equalities. These are increasingly being taken up by the school community. During the visit parents and other adults from the community were developing their computer skills. This centre provides full day care for under 5s, an internet café for social activities and clubs such as 'stay and play' for children and their parents or carers. Parents appreciate the opportunities for further study that the centre provides.
- Support for pupils who are from ethnic minority backgrounds is outstanding. The school employs staff who speak several languages, which enables them to communicate effectively with children and families who are learning English. Additional lessons are provided and an effective tracking system is in place to ensure that these pupils make good or better progress. The curriculum is adapted to meet their needs and these pupils do not always take part in the main lessons until they have the necessary language skills.
- The school's partnership work with external agencies who support children's health and well-being is outstanding. Excellent relationships exist with health and social care workers and voluntary groups as a result of the headteacher's pathfinding work as an extended school. Parents particularly appreciate the school's efforts to find ways to help the children who act as carers to one or more child in the family who has a special education need. The school leadership has an excellent knowledge of what is available locally and directs families to the provision and supports them in making the first contact. This has resulted in some families being able to access a 'family holiday', raising the self-esteem of the children.
- The support for pupils with a statement of special educational needs or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Teaching assistants are well trained and are deployed effectively. Support during lessons is unobtrusive, but effective. Pupils say they appreciate the help they are given and as a consequence they are happy at school.
- The school provides a nurture group for pupils who are experiencing emotional and social difficulties. Pupils who are part of this group are given good opportunities to explore their behaviours and, as a result, most are able to reintegrate successfully into the main part of the school. Parents are very supportive of this provision and appreciate the difference it has made to their children, some of whom were at risk of exclusion.
- The curriculum the school provides to promote equalities is good. It makes effective use of the SEAL materials. During the visit an assembly provided an appropriate focus on how to be a good friend. The pupils enjoyed this, in particular the excellent example shared by the teacher of a real life experience of working with dolphins. An annual residential visit to France ensures that all pupils are given the opportunity to experience another culture and this is used well to promote their understanding of similarities and differences. All pupils are provided with the

opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities and where there are financial difficulties, funding is secured.

Areas for development

- Continue with the school's plans to improve the system for tracking individual pupils' progress to ensure that the senior leadership can quickly identify and evaluate the reasons why a minority of pupils is underachieving.
- Improve the rate of progress for those pupils who are currently underachieving.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities at Blenheim primary school.

As I explained previously, 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

Gill Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector