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Mrs Angela Evans
Headteacher
Bedelsford School
Grange Road
Kingston Upon Thames
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Dear Mrs Evans

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Moving through the system

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 3 December 2008, to look at work on developing the future economic well-being of pupils in your school. We also looked at how well arrangements are made to support pupils during their transition into post-16 provision.

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: scrutiny of relevant school and careers education documentation, observation of three lessons, interviews with staff and with pupils from years 7, 9 and 11 and a telephone interview with your Connexions adviser.

Overall, your work in developing the future economic well-being of pupils in your school is outstanding. Taking into account your pupils' complex learning disabilities and/or difficulties, they demonstrate a strongly developing self-confidence that empowers them to take the initiative and also to work constructively with others. They are actively involved in lessons and other activities. They learn very well how to deal with change and to be creative in their thinking and rational in their decision-making. Older pupils make very good progress in their financial literacy, and in their understanding of their future options. Through their work experience and other contact with employers, older pupils also develop a very good understanding of the disciplines required by the workplace.

Features of effective practice:

- The good computerised data analysis supports the tracking and assessment of pupils. This enables rapid identification of specific individual learning needs and personalised programmes for developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy, personal and social development and information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, all pupils



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are fully involved in their own learning and development of their self-esteem is impressive.

- The quality of teaching observed was outstanding. The subject knowledge and lesson planning by teachers and teaching assistants is very good. They use an excellent range of teaching strategies which includes sensory resources. Lesson objectives are pupil friendly and clearly displayed. Visual, audio and signing technology is used during lessons to focus on learning concepts and ongoing assessment. The lessons observed included individual work, some group work and use of 'talking partners' and role play. Pupils work well together. Excellent questioning includes use of alternative communications such as Makaton signing and the picture exchange communication system (PECS). These enable pupils to develop their understanding with thinking time to respond. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are enthusiastic, finding the challenging learning extremely enjoyable. Teaching and learning are regularly observed with very helpful lesson feedback. The innovative use of ICT has an outstanding impact on pupils' involvement, independence and their excellent achievement and progress.
- Curriculum provision is very good. It is practical, flexible and largely topic-based with a focus on the development of life skills. This is merged with a sensory curriculum for pupils with the most complex difficulties and disabilities. Setting in literacy and numeracy significantly accelerates pupils' progress. Interactive ICT is used in all lessons to reinforce learning concepts and enable independent access for each pupil. This includes the use of mobile plasma screens and a sensory ICT controlled 'learning theatre' classroom, complete with audio and lighting systems. The development of economic well-being is enhanced by many visits to the town. For example, pupils learn about financial capability through planning money management for shopping or restaurant trips and in using cash cards. In addition, they learn business management in mini-enterprise activities to raise funds. The popular weekly reward system involves certificates and small monetary awards which pupils save in the school bank. Pupils have many opportunities to experience a wide range of enrichment activities and to develop their decision-making skills. The school council is very active.
- School leadership at all levels is innovative and creative. It focuses on learning and achievement, with a strong commitment to inclusion within and beyond the school. The head teacher and the senior leadership team implement excellent strategies for continued development so that the school is moving forward at a rapid pace. The highly trained and experienced staff offer good support within the school and to staff in other special and mainstream schools.
- Processes for transfer and transition at all Key Stages are excellent. They ensure staff, parents and pupils understand and are involved in the policy, procedures and meetings relating to transition. In Year 9, the Connexions adviser attends all transition meetings as well as being involved in careers education, work experience placements, work related visits and mock interviews in KS4. Liaison with outside agencies is very good. Pupils are well prepared for moving on to post-16 provision and their views and decisions are a key part of the process. This makes a significant contribution to the 100% uptake of post-16 placements.

- Support is excellent for pupils with English as an additional language, looked after children who are in local authority overnight respite care, and the small minority of gifted and talented pupils.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Enhance the follow-up procedures for pupils in post-16 placements.
- Improve staff awareness of the new quality standards for information, advice and guidance.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop economic well-being in the school.

As I explained, 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

Judi Bedawi
Additional inspector

