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Mrs J Henderson
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Henderson

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: the impact that links between parents/carers and schools have on supporting and encouraging young people's achievement, well-being and personal development

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, parents and pupils, during my visit on 18 and 20 January 2010 to look at the impact that links between parents/carers and schools have on supporting and encouraging young people's achievement, well-being and personal development.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: discussions with you, key staff in the school, parents, governors, and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and attendance at a 'change team' meeting.

The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents/carers and its impact on the outcomes for children are good.

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is good.

- Pupils are clear about the school's expectations for completing homework and daily reading. Parents help with these tasks, often writing in their children's reading records or homework books. Expectations are consistent. Some staff provide useful explanations on homework sheets to support parents in helping their children's learning at home.
- Parents are positive about supporting the school and their children. The majority feel well-informed and appreciate the approachability of staff who

they say are readily available for informal discussions about their children's learning.

- Attendance at parents' consultations meetings to discuss their children's progress is high. Events, such as concerts and assemblies, are exceptionally well attended. The active, thriving Parent Teacher Association provides a range of social events that brings parents and carers into school and involves them in school life. A good proportion of parents attends workshops to learn how to help their children's learning at home.
- Induction meetings for entry into the Reception class make clear how parents can help children and give guidance on developing key skills such as phonics and reading. Recently, parents of children in the Reception year have been encouraged to stay at the start of the day and learn about activities. This gives parents an insight into their children's learning. The new system of encouraging parents to record observations of children's achievement at home has been received well.

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of provision

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

- Several parents help regularly in class, for example with reading, and parental expertise is used on an ad-hoc basis by staff. The school does not have a coherent, systematic approach to using parents' skills and expertise as part of its provision.
- Parents receive regular information on their children's learning. Targets are shared with parents and curriculum information suggests ways in which parents can help; many do. For example, many parents support the school's work by taking their children to places of interest to enhance their experiences.
- Home visits ensure that nursery staff have information on children's interests and strengths before they start school and take account of these in their planning. Not all reception pupils transfer from the school's nursery and there is no similar system to visit homes to exchange information on children's learning as they start school.

The impact of the parental involvement on inclusion

The impact of the parental involvement on inclusion is good.

- Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities perceive that the school is working in close partnership with them to help their children. Parents gave some moving examples of how the school supports their children's social and emotional needs.
- Good links with external agencies ensure that parents, school staff and experts work together effectively as a team to support pupils' learning.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents is good.

- You strongly lead the commitment of involving parents in school life and in their children's learning. However, this priority is not always reflected in documents, such as the school development plan, or in policies.
- The new action plan for parental engagement has appropriate actions and a clear focus for what you hope to achieve. However, the criteria by which you will measure the impact of your planned actions are not always quantifiable or sufficiently focused on pupils' progress.
- The 'change team' has been re-energised since the previous inspection with judicious plans to formalise the way it operates. This group provides you with a useful sounding board for developments in the school. It also ensures that parents are able to contribute their views and ideas to key documents such as the 'ethos and vision' statement. Plans to re-launch the home-school agreement are well advanced.
- Governors' plans to develop a working group to oversee parental engagement are appropriate, but at an early stage of development.
- Information to parents is regular and generally accessible. You acknowledge that the website is in a state of flux at present and not working well as a means of communicating to parents about their children's learning. Plans to improve parental access to information through relaunching and updating the website and through the new Managed Learning Environment (MLE) are well underway.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- updating the website, as planned, both as a means of general communication and, through the MLE, as a method of increasing parents' involvement in their children's learning
- finding ways of evaluating the impact of parents' involvement in learning on pupils' outcomes, including by having sharper targets in the action plan
- making use of parental expertise in a coordinated, systematic way to contribute to the curriculum.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the impact of the work of parents and carers in the school.

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

Jane Wotherspoon
Her Majesty's Inspector