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Mrs J Nock
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Nock

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: the quality and impact of partnership provision in schools for children in service families

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 18 and 19 October 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of partnerships, including the quality of the partnerships between schools and agencies and between schools and parents, I looked at how effective the partnerships are in improving children's personal well-being and learning. I also considered the nature of the support given to these children, including those in the most vulnerable circumstances, or those who have a particular special educational need and/or disability, and the arrangements to ensure the continuity of provision when children move in and out of your school.

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 included: discussions with school leaders, pupils and their parents from service families and with a representative of the local authority. I also evaluated school documentation including the school development plan, the pupil mobility policy, information received by the school from pupils' previous schools; and assessment and tracking data.

The school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children who are in families of service personnel is good.

Key features

- Pupils from service families frequently enter and leave the school at times other than the norm. The school has a new mobility policy with effect from September 2010, which clearly sets out the procedures to be followed and the responsibilities of all those involved. This ensures that pupils make a good start in this school and are set up well with all the information necessary for a successful transition when they leave. As yet, the policy has not been shared with parents and carers, although the school intends to do this.
- The school has good relationships with parents and carers who report that you and senior staff are very responsive and proactive in responding to their queries and concerns. It has also set up systems to help new arrivals integrate socially, ensuring that they have 'buddies' to help them settle in. These procedures are reviewed regularly by seeking the views of parents, carers and pupils, leading to changes and improvements to the system.
- Since your arrival, a range of new policies and procedures have been introduced in the school which have served to raise the expectations of staff and pupils. These are beginning to have a positive impact on the personal development and academic achievement of all pupils, including those from service families.
- The school assesses pupils on entry to identify those who need extra support and to ensure that all pupils are placed in the most appropriate groups. Occasionally, this is hindered by late or inadequate information from previous schools. For example, records sometimes give only minimal information about previous achievement and do not record any other pertinent information about the pupils' attitudes to learning or their interests. However, the school is quick to undertake its own assessments and to respond to information from parents and carers.
- Although pupils settle well into English and mathematics programmes, there have been occasions when they find that they are repeating work. For example, in history, one pupil who has moved schools frequently expressed dismay at studying the Tudors for the third time. The school has noted this and is seeking ways to avoid such repetition in their newly devised curriculum.
- The school works well in partnership with the local authority, which has provided timely and targeted support for pupils. It has also provided well devised training for staff to enable them to better meet the needs of individual pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those requiring support in improving behaviour. This has increased the expertise of staff in assessing pupils accurately and in providing appropriate, tailor-made programmes of study for them in core subjects. Coupled with new school policies and procedures, this emphasis on individual requirements enables pupils from service families to generally make at least the same progress as their peers.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with children and their parents who are in families of service personnel.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector