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Mr S Eardley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Eardley

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 26 January 2010.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on how the school's work with parents and carers affects a range of outcomes for pupils.

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: interviews with staff, governors, parents and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; observation of the school at work; and a review of some of the pupils' reading diaries in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The overall effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding.

### **The impact of parental involvement on outcomes**

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is outstanding.

- Your induction arrangements work very well. There are strong links with all local pre-school providers. Settling-in sessions and home visits positively establish early relationships with parents and make expectations of their involvement clear.
- Parents find information-sharing sessions and booklets, such as those about phonics, very useful to them in helping their child. Reading diaries

encourage an effective two-way channel of communication between home and school.

- You work really hard to prepare pupils and their parents for a smooth transition between Reception and Year 1 and for Year 6 pupils to the next stage of their education. Consequently, changes in ethos are clear and pupils make the adjustments more readily, well supported by their parents and carers.
- The school considers parental involvement in specific sessions or projects well. Expectations of how parents are to be involved in these are usually made clear.
- Parents and carers know what their children are learning more generally through high-quality curriculum newsletters. They are mostly aware of their children's specific targets and the school continues to work to provide information on how they can help their child achieve them.
- Homework works best when it links closely to the curriculum and engages families. Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy working with parents or carers to produce something related to the current topic. This has a very positive influence on their enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning.
- Family Learning opportunities enhance parents' knowledge of how literacy and numeracy is taught in school. This is beneficial to their understanding and raises their confidence in helping their children.

### **The impact of the involvement of parents on the quality of provision**

The impact of the involvement of parents on the quality of provision is outstanding.

- Many parents are directly involved in the life of the school through governance, the Parents' Forum, the Parents' and Friends' Association and by being a regular or occasional parent volunteer. Parents have influenced a wide range of school and curriculum policies and have enhanced the curriculum in many positive ways.
- You regularly incorporate parents' ideas into the school, adapting the provision to the requirements of the current users. For example, extended school provision and extra-curricular activities are tailored to meet families' needs and preferences. These also provide many ways in which parents can be involved in particular sessions and projects with a high percentage of parents taking up these opportunities.
- Parents are used extensively as a resource for teaching and learning. They frequently share their skills and knowledge with groups of pupils.
- High-quality curriculum information sessions for parents and carers prepare them well to support their child's learning and you usually ensure that parents who are unable to attend still have access to the relevant information. However, the timing of the events is sometimes too late in the calendar to be of maximum benefit.
- Guides for parents are well written and used well by parents to enable them to help their children's learning at home. Parents have been key to

changing the way that the school sets homework which they clearly regard as an extremely important aspect of school life.

- The school welcomes all family members to school lunches, class or honours award assemblies and special events. The take-up of these opportunities by parents, including non-resident parents, and grandparents is high and increasing.
- Parents and carers, including those of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage or with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are regularly informed about their children's progress. They are starting to be involved in the process of assessment and target-setting but the school recognises that it has more to do here.

### **The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion**

The impact of the involvement of parents on inclusion is outstanding.

- All staff provide a very warm welcome and support to all families. This is especially appreciated by those families transferring their children to the school partway through their primary education and it ensures that time is not lost during the settling-in process.
- The more visible presence of staff, including yourself, in the playground has improved relationships and communication, meaning that concerns can be dealt with more easily.
- You work exceptionally closely with the parents of children with medical, behavioural or special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that their needs are thoroughly accounted for and that they make the best progress possible.
- You also work proactively with other external partners for the benefit of parents and children. You have developed sensitivity in knowing when to support swiftly and when not to intervene, but have developed a hard line in following up issues surrounding attendance and punctuality.

### **The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents**

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

- The school consults with parents and carers regularly and takes their views very seriously, taking action where appropriate. Every event is followed by a parental evaluation and you improve the provision for parents based on their feedback.
- You successfully engender a sense of school community. Events such as 'Ground force day', which involve team effort, make a difference and reflect parental commitment. This has a positive impact, with pupils and their families really feeling that they belong to the school.
- The parents' forum fulfils an extremely useful function, enabling parents and carers to be actively involved in shaping school and curriculum policy.

- The school is continuing to identify effective strategies for engaging parents and carers in their children's learning and development. This was the particular responsibility of one member of staff until very recently and this has very positively moved the work forward. You recognise the need to continue to monitor this and to sustain the work already started.
- Future aims in relation to parents and carers are explicit in the school's improvement plan but are not interwoven through all areas. You have evaluated the partnership with parents accurately and understand your strengths and areas for further development.
- You work tirelessly to engage those parents who believe the school is educating their child well to understand the importance of their role and continued engagement with their children's learning.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- always making clear the school's expectations of how parents are to be involved in their children's learning
- continuing to monitor and evaluate the impact on outcomes for pupils of the school's work with parents
- further involving parents, including those of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, in the setting and monitoring of targets
- providing more curriculum events for parents earlier in the school year.

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 Melbourne**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**