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Mr R McGovern
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Dear Mr McGovern

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 students, during my visit on 27 and 28 September 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for students 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 students' personal well-being and learning. I also considered the nature of the support given to these students, 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 students 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: meetings with senior staff, parents and carers of service students, and a group of students from service families. I spoke to representatives of the local authority with whom the school works in partnership and considered school documentation including assessment and achievement data, school policies and students' records.

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

Key features

- Many students from service families are boarders at the school. Students come from all services and from a wide geographical region, including abroad. Initial contact with parents and students is excellent. Parents and carers and students are interviewed and information is collected from their schools as part of the admissions process. These procedures are used exceptionally well to gain knowledge and information about individuals so that provision can be tailored to suit them.
- The school is sometimes frustrated in its attempts to meet the needs of its students in a timely fashion. In spite of its best efforts, some primary schools in the United Kingdom and from abroad send only limited information and do not pass on school records in a timely manner, potentially causing delays in providing a full picture of the students' strengths and needs. However, the school has good systems to counteract this so that transitions in and out of the school are managed well.
- Students in the school make at least good progress in their learning, with some making outstanding progress. Students from service families make at least as good progress as their peers and whatever their starting points.
- Provision and outcomes for students from service families with special educational needs and/or disabilities are excellent. The school knows its students' needs clearly and tailors support for individuals superbly. Parents and carers speak very highly of the support that students receive to enable them to make good progress in their learning and personal development, develop their self-esteem and cope with difficult circumstances arising from the experience of service families.
- Sorting out the responsibilities for providing medical and educational support for those who require it, but reside in different counties, can lead to significant delays in providing essential services. However, the school is determined to provide all students with the best education possible and persistently resolves these difficulties. Once established, the school works in partnership with other services excellently so that support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is comprehensive and tailored very carefully to individuals, improving their self-esteem, personal development and achievement. The school can point to very impressive successes with students who have thrived as a direct result of coming to Sexey's School.
- The school's dialogue with parents and carers is excellent. Parents and carers said that they had complete faith in the school and that it provided students with the stability, personal attention and support to thrive and prepare well for the future. The school's ethos is shared by the whole staff in this highly cohesive and outward-looking community.
- Students were similarly confident that the school was providing them with an excellent education. They spoke highly of how well they are known and appreciated as individuals and were fully confident that there were adults in the school who were readily available to discuss problems with. They appreciate the quality of the education that they receive and of the boarding facilities, which many service family students use.

- Effective leadership and management at all levels ensure that planning for service students is of a high quality. The school looks beyond itself to establish productive relationships with similar schools and learn from their experience. Good systems are in place to monitor students' progress which is used increasingly well to identify the achievement of particular individuals and groups. Staff have a good, and in some cases a personal understanding of the needs of students from service families.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with students 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. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett
Her Majesty's Inspector