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29 September 2010

Mr A Price
Headteacher
Prince Rupert School
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Dear Mr Price

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 our visit on 9 September 2010 to look at the school's contribution to the quality of provision and partnerships for children and young people 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 and young people's personal well-being and learning. I also considered the nature of the support given to these children, including those children in the most vulnerable circumstances, or those who have a particular special educational need or disability, and the arrangements to ensure the continuity of provision during children's 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 you and other school staff, students, parents, the Chair of the School Governance Committee, a speech and language therapist, an education social worker, and a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service worker. A range of information and documentation was scrutinised.

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

Key features

- Prince Rupert School is fully inclusive. Staff are very quick to take the initiative and foster positive relationships with parents that enable them to work together to support students' progress and well-being.
- Staff, including well-trained teaching assistants, know students very well and are attentive to any changes in their behaviour and emotional disposition. They are extremely quick to respond to such changes and involve external agencies where necessary to provide appropriate targeted support.
- Very good links with external agencies, especially those based at the Student and Family Services Centre, are founded on constructive relationships and well-established ways of working. Shared trust and mutual respect for professional expertise have a positive impact on the effectiveness of provision that is evident in the outcomes for all students.
- Data indicate that all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress in relation to their starting points. A contributory factor to this good progress is the careful way the school tracks and analyses students' performance throughout the year towards achieving their challenging targets.
- Parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully involved in planning the programme of support, in setting targets, and in reviewing their progress towards them.
- The movement of students in and out of the school is managed exceptionally well. The school puts together a comprehensive pack of information for parents and receiving schools that includes progress, curriculum coverage and references to students' specific learning needs.
- Transition arrangements into the school at Year 7 are effective. The school is keen to strengthen further its links with its feeder primary schools with specific reference to teaching methodology and curriculum continuity for the foundation subjects.
- The size of the school and number of staff restricts its ability to provide the breadth of choice for those studying GCSE and those in the sixth form. This situation is not helped by the time taken to gain clearance for new staff to take up their appointments. Nonetheless, the school does extremely well to overcome potential barriers to provision and continuity of learning by making the most of staff expertise and by providing individually tailored courses where it can.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work with children and young people 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 Service Children's Education.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Keeler
Her Majesty's Inspector