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Mrs Linda Wells
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wells

Ofsted survey programme – Evaluation of Reforming and Developing the Workforce

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit to Lydford Primary School on 18 October 2006 to evaluate the impact of Reforming and Developing the Workforce.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff, governors and children, scrutiny of documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of reforming and developing the workforce in your school was judged to be good.

Impact on standards and the outcomes of Every Child Matters

Achievement and standards are good.

- Standards are above average at Key Stages 1 and 2. Contextual value added scores show pupils make average progress at Key Stage 2. The recent work of current pupils shows improved progress as a result of the more detailed academic guidance they are now receiving, which has been made possible

through very effective use of your dedicated headship time and of teachers planning, preparation and assessment time.

- Children feel safe in the school and value the support and help they receive from their teachers and members of the wider workforce.
- The school has the Healthy Schools Award and the children are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. The ethos of mutual respect and the strong relationships between teachers and the wider workforce is reassuring for the children and contributes very well to their emotional well-being.
- Behaviour is very good. Children show high levels of consideration for each other, for instance in the playground and on the sports field.
- Very good use is being made of external expertise in Physical Education (PE), music and French provided by local specialist secondary schools and sports organisations. This is raising pupils' standards of achievement in these subjects.

Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

The impact of the strategy on the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- The skills of all staff, and of external expertise, are being used well to enhance the teaching and learning of all pupils. For example, the use of your own expertise in Information & Communication Technology (ICT), and those of Teaching Assistants (TA's), including the use of the TA who is a qualified teacher as cover supervisor for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.
- The quality of assessment has improved due to the designated use of dedicated headship and PPA time to plan and implement a whole-school approach.

Impact on the quality of curriculum

The impact of the strategy on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- The use of external expertise and planned use of external resources such as the National Trust site at Lydford Gorge is widening the range of opportunities for pupils to learn in a variety of situations and is enhancing their enjoyment of school.
- The investment in ICT has enabled pupils to make more rapid progress in gaining the skills needed to use computers and other equipment. They recognise that this is a good aspect of their education at Lydford.

Leadership and management of reforming and developing the workforce

Leadership and management of the strategy are good.

- The headteacher has a very good understanding of and commitment to the principles of workforce reform and development.

- The school has made good progress in implementing all phases of the workload agreement. Performance management, including of support staff, professional development and the use of staff skills are particular strengths.
- There are now good arrangements to ensure that the headteacher has time to fulfil her leadership and management responsibilities. The use of this time for monitoring teaching and learning and for improving the quality of academic guidance and support for pupils is very appropriate.

Impact on training and managing a reformed workforce

- Performance management of all staff and the identification and use of appropriate training opportunities are very good.
- Additional qualifications, including the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPOH) for the head and another teacher, and NVQ training for support staff, have been used very well to develop the school's leadership and management capacity.

Impact on inclusion

The impact of the strategy on provision for inclusion is very good.

- The excellent systems for academic guidance and support mean pupils are well aware of the progress they are making and understand very well what they need to do in order to move to the next stage in their learning. Parents also appreciate the quality of the guidance.
- The appointment of an additional teaching assistant has improved the quality of individual support for pupils in Key Stage 2.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- improve the coherence of the management responsibilities undertaken by staff so that there is clearer direction in what is expected of them
- identify a wider range of opportunities with local schools and other partners for more able pupils to develop their gifts and talents.

We also discussed that the fact that most staff have part-time contracts is a barrier to progress. While this cannot easily be remedied, it needs to be borne in mind when making future appointments.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to reform and develop the school workforce.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler
Additional Inspector