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21 January 2007

Mr J S Gore
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Dear Mr Gore

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 on 18 January 2007 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 and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and observation of pupils' work.

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

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the school workforce on standards and the outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM) is good.

- The very positive contribution of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Department, which is staffed by teaching assistants and is led by a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO), who was herself a teaching assistant, is having a very positive impact on the achievement of those pupils with special educational needs and is contributing effectively to the Every Child

Matters (ECM) outcomes. Each of the following pupil support mechanisms were developed and organised by the SEN department.

- The homework club and the before school support sessions, contribute to ECM outcome two, enjoying and achieving. They enable pupils to make progress, keep up with their peers or review and revise difficult areas, enhancing their confidence and self esteem and improving their progress.
- The buddy system, which ensures that each pupil has another older and appropriately trained pupil to communicate any difficulties or concerns to, contributes to outcome three, staying safe.

Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the school workforce on the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time ensures that teachers now have more time to effectively plan their teaching and to meet the needs of their pupils more effectively.
- The more intensive use of teaching assistants improves the quality of differentiation in lessons and means that individual needs are met more effectively, which contributes to the enhanced confidence and self esteem of pupils.
- More personalised learning is possible as a result of the deployment of teaching assistants to support small groups and individuals.
- The daily homework clubs, run by teaching assistants, mean that pupils are less likely to fall behind in their work and provide them with opportunities to gain additional support, to revise and to clarify issues.

Impact on the quality of curriculum

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the workforce on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- As well as the wide range of extra curricular activities provided by the school, the proactive approach of the SEN department enhances provision further, in relation to the daily homework clubs and other extra curricular support, to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

Leadership and management of reforming and developing the school workforce

The quality of leadership and management in relation to reforming and developing the school workforce is good.

- The headteacher is committed to the remodelling agenda and to making full use of the particular strengths of all staff. The appointment of a non teaching SENCO demonstrates this very effectively.

- Close attention is paid to the monitoring of cover and PPA time and to the effective monitoring and tracking of pupils' achievement generally and pupils with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in particular.
- Appropriate dedicated headship time to devote to strategic planning ensures that the school's development is well planned and implemented.
- The delegation of tasks, such as the organisation of cover, has released the deputy headteacher to focus much more on teaching and learning and on behaviour management issues around the school.
- The SENCO now has more time for the role leading to a more proactive contribution from the SEN department.
- Despite this, relatively little has been done on evaluating the impact of the workforce reform agenda on the quality of provision for pupils.

Impact on training and developing a reformed school workforce

The quality of training and development in relation to reforming and developing the school workforce is good.

- All staff, whether teaching or non teaching, are included in whole school in-service training sessions.
- Teaching assistants have a performance management system equivalent to teachers, with targets focused on the personal development and well being of pupils and on raising their achievement. This is supported by good training opportunities and high levels of job satisfaction.
- The performance management cycle for administrative staff still needs to be developed.
- The stable staffing structure across the whole school is evidence of high levels of satisfaction with training and development opportunities.

Impact on inclusion

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the school workforce on inclusion is good.

- There is a strong focus on meeting the individual needs of each pupil.
- The SEN department ensures that individual special needs are clearly identified and well catered for.
- The appointment of a non-teaching SENCO and the highly effective use made of teaching assistants mean that good opportunities are afforded to provide support for all pupils who need it. These are supported by the very effective relationships developed with a wide range of outside agencies.

Areas for improvement

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

- consider how to evaluate the impact of remodelling actions, such as PPA time, on teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils

- develop the performance management system for administrative staff so that it is of equivalent quality to that of teaching assistants and teaching staff.

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

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector