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Mrs Forder  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Forder

Ofsted survey inspection programme: Reforming and Developing the School Workforce

Thank you for your co-operation and hospitality, and that of the staff, during my visit to St John's School on Thursday 01 March 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 children, scrutiny of documentation, analysis of children's work and observation of three lessons.

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 satisfactory. The reforms have had a good impact on them.

- Standards are in line with average at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. Results in Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2006 from those in 2005. This was partly due to good and well-targeted levels of support for children and teachers from specialist teachers, teaching assistants and other adults working in most areas of the school.
- A range of very good initiatives underpins the school's success in developing healthy life styles for its pupils and staff. Pupils are aware of the importance of diet and have been active in promoting good eating and exercise habits.
- Through the work of the School Council and a range of extra curricular clubs pupils help to protect their school, locale and the wider environment. Working in teams they develop good social and leadership skills and an increased awareness of their responsibilities as citizens.
- Children feel happy and safe. Their learning is supported well by teachers and the wider workforce.
- There are mutually respectful relationships between pupils, teachers and the wider workforce. These enhances pupils' well-being and provision overall. Pupils understand and appreciate the inter-dependent roles played by different adults in the school.
- Children behave very well. They are sensitive to each other's needs and considerate of adults in the school and the wider community.
- Planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for teachers is provided by specialist teachers for music, a Higher Level Teaching Assistant throughout the school, a nursery nurse in Reception and a teacher of French in Years 3 to 6. Pupils recognise that this enables teachers to plan interesting lessons and gives them the opportunity to work with staff apart from their regular class teacher, preparing older pupils well for their secondary school experience.

### Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

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

- Teachers use PPA time effectively to improve learning. Using the new staff room with its access to internet, teachers are able to develop resources that help to make lessons more interesting and meet with teaching assistants to share planning and support for pupils.
- An increasingly wider range of information concerning pupils' progress is now available for all staff. Although clear progress is being made in developing lesson planning, this information is not yet used fully enough to target learning well for all pupils or to ensure sufficient pace in some lessons.
- In classrooms teaching assistants are aware of the needs of the individuals with whom they work and support them well to achieve well.

## Impact on the quality of the curriculum

The impact on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- Music and French specialist teachers enhance staff expertise across the curriculum. Good links with a local secondary school that has specialist sports status have provided specialist input in physical education. The school employs a swimming teacher, enabling all pupils to work with a specialist at the local pool weekly. Pupils appreciate this provision and enjoy their learning with specialists.
- Good liaison between specialist teachers and class teachers supports the monitoring of pupils' progress and regular feedback to pupils and their parents to identify strengths and areas for continued improvement.
- There is a growing range of extra-curricular clubs provided by teachers and the wider workforce, including sporting and musical activities, the eco-club and work to support different charities. These help to develop pupils' social and interpersonal skills and their awareness of social responsibilities. Pupils enjoy participating in these activities and benefit in doing so, working with the wider workforce within and outside the school.
- The inclusive ethos of the school encourages the involvement of the wider workforce to enhance provision for its pupils. Parent volunteers make an important contribution to learning overall by regularly supporting pupils' reading.

## Pupil development and well-being

The impact on pupil development and well-being is good.

- Two pupils from each class are elected to form the School Council annually. Members of the Council have discrete roles to support its work across the school. Regular meetings are supported by a member of staff but chaired, minuted and organised by the pupils themselves. Pupils involved have a good understanding of their responsibilities and make sensitive suggestions for the future development of the school or objectives to support others in need.
- As part of their role as members of School Council or as participants in some clubs, pupils have opportunities to develop their financial understanding outside the classroom context, eg. in preparing to gain the school's Eco Award or Healthy Schools status. This promotes a sense of responsibility and underpins good behaviour and the positive relationships across the school and with the wider community.

## Leadership and Management

Leadership and management of the strategy are good.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a good understanding of the principles of workforce reform and are strongly committed to them.
- There has been good progress in implementing all phases of the workforce agreement. The school's strategy for implementing PPA time is clear and known to all.
- There are satisfactory arrangements in place to provide management time for leaders to monitor teaching and learning as well as track pupils' performance. Procedures are in place to enable the headteacher and her deputy to have leadership and management time. The headteacher has an external mentor who is not an educationalist with whom she has regular opportunity to reflect on change and management decisions.
- The management structure of the school has been appropriately refined to include the wider workforce. A senior teaching assistant now manages part of the teaching assistant team and acts as assistant Special Educational Needs Coordinator. An effective agreement has been established with a local secondary school to provide specialist additional Information and Communications Technology (ICT) expertise to service the school's ICT facilities. The expertise of a senior administrator has been developed through training, enabling her to take responsibility for the school's data and its analysis. These developments recognise the expertise of the wider workforce and give more time for teachers and managers to focus on pupils' needs and to support learning.
- Significant improvements in the school's buildings and site in recent years have had a very positive impact on the work of staff and provision for pupils. The developments have provided valuable additional classrooms, a library with expanding resources, an ICT suite and a medical room. In addition, interactive whiteboards have been installed in each classroom linked to a network and laptops have been provided for all teachers and a senior teaching assistant.
- The very good strategies developed and implemented by the headteacher and staff have supported the school in its success in gaining the Healthy Schools and Eco-school awards.

#### Impact on training and managing a reformed workforce

The impact on training and managing a reformed workforce is good.

- The school has a pleasant and calm environment. Its atmosphere is welcoming and supportive, building on its inclusive ethos. This is underpinned by good systems to provide training and performance management for all staff.
- Managers involve all staff, and often pupils, in informing decision-making.

## Impact on inclusion

The impact on inclusion is good.

- Teaching assistants support learning well in each classroom. The school adopts various approaches to encourage pupils with particular needs in classroom and, particularly, extra-curricular activities.

## Areas for improvement

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

- evaluate the impact of the initiatives linked to workforce remodelling on standards and quality more formally, reporting them to governors to inform future planning
- improve the use of available data and information about pupils' progress to sharpen targets for individual pupils in lesson planning and in classroom practice.

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

Dr Calvin Pike  
Additional Inspector