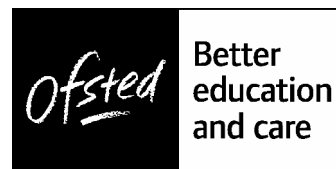


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28 November 2006

Mr John Hyde
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hyde

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 Grafton Junior School on 16 November 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 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.

- Standards are below average on entry to the school but mainly in line with them at the end of Year 6. This indicates good achievement. In contrast to the national trend, boys have demonstrated better achievement than girls in the last two years. Results in Key Stage 2 tests in 2006 are higher than those in 2005. This is partly due to the good level of support children and teachers receive from support assistants and other adults working in most areas of the school.

- Children are safe, feel happy and enjoy being at the school. They are supported well in their learning by teachers, support assistants and the wider workforce.
- A range of very good developments is underpinning the school's focus healthy life styles. Pupils are knowledgeable about the importance of diet and, including through the School Council's work, are keen to raise awareness of healthy eating issues as well as support the work of charities in doing the same. Relationships between teachers and the wider workforce and pupils are strong and mutually respectful, enhancing provision and pupils' well-being.
- Behaviour is very good. Children understand and live up to the expectations set for them. They are considerate of each other, adults in the school and the wider community.
- Time is provided for teachers to plan, prepare and assess (PPA) pupils' work by senior support assistants in Years 3 and 4, a sports coach and a qualified teacher who covers different subject areas including ICT. Along with other developments that engage pupils in working with other adults in the school, the experience of working with staff other than their class teacher prepares children well for secondary school transfer.

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 well to support improvement in individual classes and across the school. Outside PPA time, teachers and support assistants share lesson objectives in order to meet the needs of most pupils well.
- Very good use is made of staff deployed to cover PPA time where the quality of teaching is good. All staff involved in providing PPA time regularly review pupils' progress with the class teacher as part of the school's assessment process.

Impact on the quality of the curriculum

The impact on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- The employment of a PE coach and a teacher who brings particular skills in ICT has reinforced staff expertise across the curriculum. At the same time, cover by senior support assistants has enabled the school to enhance the relationship for learning between younger children and the assistants within as well as outside the classroom environment.
- In addition, the expertise of the wider workforce has been used to extend the impact of curriculum provision and whole school initiatives further. There has been a close focus on developing health awareness supported by Borough courses, engaging its catering services and encouraging School Council activity. The special needs coordinator

(SENCO) and team of five support assistants have developed strong links with outside agencies, including the Children's Homecare team, to enhance support for individual pupils within lessons and in small groups. The school's welfare assistant, who is also a governor, has developed a team of tuck-shop monitors who are responsible for placing orders through wholesalers and comparing cost and sale prices. Extra-curricular clubs involve a wide range of pupils. As a result of recognising and valuing the expertise of the wider workforce, the school has enhanced the harmonious and productive relationships between pupils and the wider workforce and reinforced its inclusive ethos for learning.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the strategy are good.

- The headteacher and senior leaders show clear understanding of the principles of workforce reform and development and are strongly committed to them.
- Good progress has been made in implementing all phases of the workforce agreement. Strategies for implementing PPA time are well defined and have been discussed fully, although the school recognises the need to monitor the quality of provision more closely in order to share good practice more widely.
- There are satisfactory arrangements to provide management time for leaders to fulfil their responsibilities. Although there has been recent discussion of the need to provide dedicated leadership and management time for the headteacher and deputies, strategies to do so have not yet been formalised.
- The school has begun to invest in resources that enhance teaching provided by teachers and the wider workforce. Year 6 pupils, for example, appreciate the new 'visualisers' in their classrooms and the benefits they bring in making their learning more stimulating.

Impact on training and managing a reformed workforce

- Good systems have been developed to support pupils and staff alike. Along with teachers, the wider workforce has opportunities for continuing professional development. For example, within the school one teacher, who was previously a teaching assistant, was encouraged to study for a degree part-time and gain teaching status through the graduate teacher route. A support assistant, who provides PPA time, previously worked within the school in a different role which did not require the same level of classroom skills.
- The headteacher and senior managers involve all staff, and often pupils, in the process of informing and making decisions.

Impact on inclusion

The impact on inclusion is good.

- The school has a strong inclusive ethos. It has a welcoming and calm atmosphere.
- The school has rationalised the deployment of support assistants in classrooms and within the special needs team to support the most vulnerable pupils and the increasing number of new pupils for whom English is an additional language. Support is good overall, although expertise to address the needs of pupils for whom English is a new language is limited.

Areas for improvement

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

- evaluate the impact of workforce remodelling on standards and the quality of teaching and learning, sharing the outcomes with governors to inform future planning
- consider the impact of the wider workforce in the school on standards with particular reference to differences in achievement between boys and girls
- review support provided for pupils for whom English is a new language in order to enable them to integrate more quickly into the work of the classroom and make better progress in their learning.

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