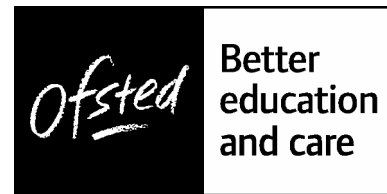


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12 March 2007

Mrs M Waplinton
Headteacher
The Sacred Heart Language College
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Dear Mrs Waplinton

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 The Sacred Heart on Monday 05 March, 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 and scrutiny of documentation.

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

- Standards are consistently significantly above average at each key stage. The continued trend of improvement in students' progress is due in part to the effective support they receive from associate staff both within and outside lessons.
- Students seen during the visit were extremely perceptive about the school community including the contribution made by associate staff. Students contribute very positively to school life and are involved in decision making. Their involvement in school development planning is impressive.

Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

- The work of the wider workforce, including administrative staff, the reprographics team, technicians, learning support assistants and the resources officer has reduced the administrative load on teachers and this, together with time gained from the employment of external invigilators and cover supervisors, is enabling teachers to give increased attention to the planning and content of lessons and to tracking pupils' progress.
- Teachers have more time to review and plan schemes of work and to engage in collaborative activities, such as training to use interactive white boards and peer observation within departments, which allow sharing of good practice.

Impact on the quality of curriculum

- The curriculum meets the interests and abilities of the majority of students. The impact of workforce reform on the curriculum is limited.

Leadership and management of reforming and developing the workforce

- Senior leaders have a very good understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of workforce reform. Staff have been fully involved in a consultative process to implement changes. The school, aided by the change team, has made very good progress in implementing the workload agreement.
- The expansion of the senior leadership team and the inclusion of the school manager have been effective in distributing leadership and refocusing the headteacher's workload.
- The school has evaluated aspects of workforce reform, to assess impact and cost. These aspects include the delegation of administrative tasks from teachers, the transfer of cover, examination administration and invigilation, the use of information and communications technology and the appointment of a school manager. In addition feedback from student and staff surveys indicates high levels of satisfaction.

Impact on training and managing a reformed workforce

- The school is supportive of the training and development of associate staff. The distinctive skills and experience of individuals are recognised and career development encouraged.
- There are clear and well-understood line management arrangements for members of the associate staff and a comprehensive system of performance management.
- The school manager has been very well supported in her career development. Her attendance at local networking meetings involving other school managers in the borough provides a very good opportunity to share experiences and expertise.

Impact on inclusion

- The school presents a very inclusive ethos where all members of the school community, staff and students, are valued and encouraged to develop their full potential.

Areas for improvement

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

- further evaluate the impact of gained time, time for planning, preparation and assessment and the cover supervision arrangements, on students' achievement and the quality of teaching and 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

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector