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Mr T Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Jones

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Deploying, training and developing the reformed workforce

Thank you for your co-operation and hospitality, and that of the staff, during our visit to Byron Court School on Friday 28 September 2007 to evaluate the impact of the deployment, training and development of the reformed 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, observation of parts of three teaching sessions and scrutiny of documentation.

The overall effectiveness of the reformed workforce in your school was judged to be satisfactory.

The impact of the reformed workforce on achievement and standards is satisfactory.

- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school and at Key Stage 1 is below the national average. By Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above the national average. All pupils progress very well including those pupils with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. This is partly due to the support provided by the reformed workforce.

- Although the reformed workforce has been deployed to raise achievement and standards, there are no formal systems to assess the impact of workforce reform on pupils' progress.

The impact of the reformed workforce on the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- Members of the reformed workforce have developed good relationships with teachers and pupils. Their support is valued within the school.
- There is a clear rationale for how some roles contribute to teaching and learning but this is not consistent across the workforce. The deployment of some learning support assistants to supervise pupils rather than improve learning leads to inconsistent working practices. Members of the reformed workforce have too little involvement in setting targets for pupils' learning.

The impact of the reformed workforce on the quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 provides opportunities for all learners to progress well. Members of the reformed workforce enhance the curriculum through contributing to extra-curricular activities. Pupils particularly value the after-school sports clubs.
- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage has not been improved sufficiently since the previous inspection because the knowledge and skills of teaching assistants have not been developed in such a way as to enable the necessary changes to be made.

The leadership and management of the reformed workforce are satisfactory.

- The selection and recruitment of the reformed workforce are good. You are committed to recruiting a workforce with suitable qualifications to support pupils' learning. Candidates are tested in literacy, numeracy and reading. Those who fail to reach the required standard are informed of relevant courses run by the local authority that will enable them to improve their skills.
- The school lacks procedures to appraise the effectiveness of administrative staff and teaching assistants and to further develop their knowledge, skills and expertise as part of a coherent staff development programme.

- Leaders and managers have not provided teaching assistants, who provide support within the classroom and for individuals during withdrawal programmes, with a sufficiently clear understanding of how their roles improve pupils' learning.
- The potential of the reformed workforce to improve the Foundation Stage curriculum, which was identified as an area for improvement during the last Ofsted inspection in July 2006, has not been fully considered.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is satisfactory.

- The school has an inclusive ethos where the contribution of members of the reformed workforce is valued by staff and pupils.

Areas for improvement

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

- ensure the deployment, training and development of the reformed workforce are planned coherently across all areas of learning to clarify the purpose of each role in improving outcomes for pupils and contributing to school improvement
- develop systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of the reformed workforce on pupils' learning
- involve the reformed workforce more in setting specific targets for pupils' progress
- consider how the reformed workforce could contribute to enhancing the Foundation Stage curriculum.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to train and develop the reformed 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