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04 October 2007

Ms Nicola Gambles
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Gambles

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

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 02 October 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 discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of learning in the Foundation Stage and Year 5.

The overall effectiveness of the reformed workforce in your school was judged to be good with some excellent features.

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

- Pupils' attainment on entering the school is generally below average, with some cohorts well below. In 2006, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below average. However, given their starting points, pupils' progress was satisfactory. Recent assessment information indicates that pupils are now making better progress. The school has a very high proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities: they achieve well.
- The reformed workforce is making a considerable impact on the achievement of some pupils by accelerating their progress with carefully planned and targeted support. Their interventions are improving pupils' attendance, well-being and readiness to learn.

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

- The reformed workforce is central to the development of teaching and learning. Every member of staff, whatever his or her role, understands that interactions with pupils are opportunities for them to learn. Good use is made of their talents to enhance provision. For example, a French advanced teaching assistant teaches French to pupils in Year 6 during the time set aside for teachers' planning and preparation. The pupils talk shrewdly about the difference it makes to be taught by a native speaker.
- Advanced teaching assistants and teaching assistants work closely with teachers in highly productive relationships. Good use is made of assessment information to plan for and evaluate the learning of individual pupils. The school's system for setting targets begins with a focus on individual learners and requires staff (including the reformed workforce) to reflect regularly on pupils' progress.
- The reformed workforce contributes powerfully to pupils' personal, development. For example, lunchtime supervisors, some of whom are also teaching assistants, work as a team to provide structured, purposeful lunchtime activities. Pupils receive persistent and consistent messages about high expectations for their behaviour and they are given the security to express themselves whilst being aware of others.

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

- The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for all learners. The reformed workforce contributes valuably to curriculum development by taking responsibility for particular aspects. For example, an advanced teaching assistant leads on promoting and evaluating the social and emotional aspects of learning. The premises manager has a passion for gardening and, as part of her role, works with pupils to develop their gardening skills and ecological awareness. The reformed workforce will play a part in plans to expand opportunities for creativity within the curriculum.

The leadership and management of the reformed workforce are good with some excellent features.

- The school is emerging from a challenging period of transition, having been created from an amalgamation of two schools two years ago.
- You and your and senior leaders have a strong commitment to training and developing the workforce at all levels. Roles have been reviewed and developed. For example, some teaching assistants have additional responsibility, such as contributing developing the school council.
- Your performance management procedures for the reformed workforce evaluate effectiveness in terms of the outcomes for pupils and progress with the school improvement plan. There are suitable opportunities for professional development and a clear rationale for how roles contribute to school improvement. Self-evaluation is regular, rigorous and accurate. Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are effective in making staff accountable for pupils' achievement and well-being.

- The school encourages members of the reformed workforce to pursue higher levels of professional accreditation. It is launching a scheme, provided by the National Association of Professional Assistants, to develop further their skills and expertise.
- The good capacity of the reformed workforce to improve outcomes for pupils, particularly vulnerable children, stems from the excellent teamwork that underpins leadership and management. Every opinion is valued equally and everyone is expected to contribute.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is good.

- The reformed workforce is highly effective in helping children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve well. The potential of this workforce to accelerate the progress of middle and higher attaining pupils, however, is not yet fully realised.
- Pupils with a first language other than English are supported effectively by a member of the reformed workforce. The number of these pupils is well below the national average, but rising.
- The school is effective in closing the gap between the achievement of vulnerable children and others. The reformed workforce is instrumental in this. They help to create and deliver innovative strategies to overcome barriers to learning, including supporting pupils and their families beyond school. The recently appointed home-school link worker is building supportive and appropriately challenging relationships with families to improve outcomes for their children. Early evidence suggests that some pupils now attend school more regularly.
- The school's supportive ethos embraces everyone. Members of the reformed workforce are valued and their contribution is recognised by the pupils, parents and other staff.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- using the expertise of the reformed workforce to accelerate the progress of middle and higher attaining pupils
- involving the reformed workforce in enhancing creativity within the 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline White
Her Majesty's Inspector