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Miss Alison Woodhouse
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Woodhouse

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

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 4 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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of one-to-one support and observation of part of a lesson.

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

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

- Students join the school with average attainment and make good progress, achieving above-average standards at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Highly effective support from the reformed workforce contributes to the good achievement of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students from minority ethnic groups also achieve well and the high quality support from the reformed workforce helps to secure these positive outcomes.
- The reformed workforce is making a considerable impact on students' achievement and well-being. The interventions are improving attendance, students' economic well-being and their capacity to learn independently.

- The school is focused clearly on raising achievement and, rightly, plans to use the skills of some of the reformed workforce to increase further the proportion of students achieving five higher-grade GCSEs.

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

- As a result of the responsibilities devolved to the reformed workforce and the specific expertise they bring, teachers are able to channel their energies into developing learners. Consequently, most students are making good progress.
- The reformed workforce plays a major part in meeting the needs of some students by personalising their learning. For example, subject technicians help to tailor learning for individuals in making products, composing music, devising and conducting experiments and giving advice about information and communication technology.
- Relationships between the reformed workforce, teachers and students are productive in increasing everyone's enjoyment of learning. The reformed workforce contributes powerfully to students' personal development. Students talk with feeling about the importance of their relationships with members of this workforce. They value, and benefit from, their guidance and the mediation undertaken on their behalf.

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

- The reformed workforce is central to curriculum development. They add breadth and depth to provision. Examples include the business centre manager and her team who organise trips, special events, visiting speakers, and support and resources for lessons, and the sports co-ordinator who challenges and supports students through the engagement of sports coaches.

The leadership and management of the reformed workforce are excellent.

- You and your senior leaders have a very strong commitment to training and developing the workforce at all levels.
- Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are effective in making staff accountable for students' achievement and well-being. The reformed workforce makes an exemplary contribution to these. For example, the data management team ensures that assessment information is timely and facilitates the regular evaluation of students' progress within and across subjects. The software for tracking students' performance, created by the systems development manager, underpins effective target-setting.
- The good performance management procedures for the reformed workforce mirror those for the teaching staff. Excellent opportunities exist for professional development and there is a clear rationale for how roles contribute to school improvement. Members of the reformed workforce feel well supported. They talk passionately about their work and have a strong sense of being part of a joint endeavour to continue improving the school.

- The school is very clear about the relationship between effective leadership and the development of teaching and learning. Members of the reformed workforce carry important leadership responsibilities that have a direct impact on the overall effectiveness of the school. The attendance co-ordinator, systems development manager and cover manager are good examples of this. Many of the reformed workforce add to the school's capacity for improvement by training other staff.
- The reformed workforce is involved in evaluating the work of the school through the research and development teams which consider, in detail, the priorities in the school improvement plan. Teamwork and self-evaluation are strengths of the school.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is excellent.

- The school is effective in closing the gap between the achievement of vulnerable children and others. The reformed workforce is deployed strategically to meet the needs of these learners.
- As a result of the reformed workforce, students are included successfully in school life. For example, learning mentors have helped to ensure a group of students at risk of underachieving attained GCSE grades commensurate with their potential.
- Members of the reformed workforce are valued and their contribution is recognised by students, parents and other staff.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the need to implement plans to use the skills of some of the reformed workforce to increase further the proportion of students achieving five higher-grade GCSEs.

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