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Mr J Baldwin  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Baldwin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 03 June 2008 to look at work in CPD.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of CPD the visit had a particular focus on how professional development activities impact on raising standards and achievement.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgement about the overall effectiveness of CPD included interviews with senior managers and a range of teaching staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of a French lesson.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be outstanding.

The strengths identified

- Identification of CPD is very accurate and reflects exemplary practice in a number of related key areas most notably the induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and the developments in coaching and mentoring.
- There is an excellent commitment and dedication to the professional development of all staff in the school as reflected in your laudable document 'Every Teacher Matters'. All CPD documentation is impressive.
- The approach to CPD is highly professional, with CPD provision evaluated systematically by senior leaders and governors. Staff know very precisely what they want to achieve and are selective about their choice of

provision. This is flexible and at times innovative, for example courses designed to address the personal needs of staff such as those who wish to retire.

- CPD plays an important role in staff retention. Staff turn over is low. Promotion and opportunities for career development are used effectively to retain good teachers and to provide them with new challenges. Many staff move onto promoted posts.
- It is evident that the school is a professional learning community and the culture of sharing best practice is firmly established. Most importantly this is embraced wholeheartedly by the staff as exemplified by the increasing number willing to lead 'Third Thursday' training sessions.
- The school's CPD provision is enhanced as a result of being a DCSF training school and excellent use is made of the skilled CPD leaders to train staff within the school and provide bespoke professional development programmes. I note several members of staff are leading teachers in their respective subjects and provide training at both a local and national level.
- There is a strong link between CPD, performance management and the school improvement plan. The performance management system is used well to identify targets, for example, pupil performance at GCSE. This is well documented in performance management records which show how CPD relates to individual, departmental and whole school targets.
- You have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous CPD inspection survey diligently particularly in the evaluation of the impact of CPD on raising standards and achievement by making improvements to teaching and learning. The work on Assessment for Learning is a fitting testament to this.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop marking and assessment procedures by improving the quality of the written comments made to the students
- increase the capacity for training and development within the school by ensuring the skills and expertise of all staff are used for the benefit of others.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop CPD in the school.

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

Mary Harlow  
Her Majesty's Inspector