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Mr M John
Headteacher
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Dear Mr John

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 05 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 staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, observation of an English lesson and a 'learning walk' around the school.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be good.

The strengths identified are as follows:

- There is an excellent commitment and dedication to the professional development of all the staff in the school as reflected in the school's laudable vision and your purposeful direction. As a result of very strong leadership by yourself and your new deputy headteacher the school has made outstanding progress in the development of CPD in such a short space of time. This was wholeheartedly acknowledged and praised by both teaching staff and support staff.

- The revised CPD policy and overall CPD plan are comprehensive documents; both demonstrate the school's desire to develop into a high quality 'collaborative learning community'. The teaching staff and support staff have responded well to the recent CPD initiatives and are now poised to take real ownership of their professional learning journey. Moreover many possess the confidence to lead CPD activities at a whole school level and develop into leaders of learning. The recent CPD self-evaluation is an excellent assessment of what the school has achieved thus far and outlines the next steps for the future development of CPD.
- 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 and progress on a year to year basis. These are well documented in performance management records which show how CPD relates to individual and whole school targets. The co-ordination of this work is excellent.
- The performance management of the support and administration teams is thorough and is very well led and managed. All are benefiting from increased professional development activities including the opportunity to take accredited courses.
- The school balances national priorities and developments well. The central theme 'the successful learner programme' is the key driver for CPD and all that the school does. Thoughtful and imaginative planning has been invested in the training days this year to bring this model alive for the staff and there is a consistent approach developing across the school to ensure lessons are engaging and interactive.
- The English lesson observed was an excellent example of how this initiative is improving teaching and learning. Stimulated by the film 'The Piano', the pupils were using commendable levels of vocabulary as they discussed aspects of film literacy. They were highly motivated and displayed an infectious enthusiasm for learning as they chatted in pairs and groups about how the use of film aspects such as camera, colour, setting and sound affect the response of the viewer. This outstanding lesson was a joy to observe.
- There is a good range of CPD activities such as twilight sessions, external courses, visits to other schools, attendance at conferences, whole day CPD with high quality trainers and the development of coaching and mentoring activities. The staff have received appropriate training on the new literacy and mathematics frameworks and good support for improvements in the use of information communications technology.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop training plans for all the staff
- provide more detail of how the school monitors and evaluates its work in the school improvement plan
- consider more formal approaches to evaluate value for money of CPD activities.

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