

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Ms M Griffin  
Headteacher  
Eltham Hill Technology College for Girls  
Eltham Hill  
London  
SE9 5EE

Dear Ms Griffin

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 our visit on 03 June 2008 to evaluate the impact of the deployment, training and development of the reformed workforce. For the purposes of this survey inspection, the term 'reformed workforce' will apply to any person employed by or working in partnership with the school who is not a qualified teacher.

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 and observation of a lesson.

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

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

- Students join the school with below average attainment and achieve standards that are near to the national average. Carefully planned and targeted support from the associate staff contributes to the positive progress made, especially by the large proportion of students who experience significant barriers to learning.
- School and local authority data indicate that many potentially vulnerable students are attaining as well as their peers in some important areas, such as reaching Level 5 at Key Stage 3 and gaining five GCSE passes. Members of the associate staff can provide some evidence of how their work contributes to this.

- Learning mentors contribute well to students' personal development and well-being by encouraging them to learn to understand their feelings and to develop their social and communication skills.
- The work of the attendance team has contributed to improved rates of attendance. Attendance rates have risen during the last year and are currently above the national average.
- The school has thorough systems to assess and track students' achievement but these are not yet used fully to monitor and evaluate the contribution that members of the associate staff make to students' learning.

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

- The strong relationships between the associate staff, teachers and students underpin effective teaching. Students talk convincingly about how support from teaching assistants, curriculum support workers and learning mentors raises their self-esteem and enable them to take more responsibility for their learning.
- The knowledge, skills and expertise of associate staff are deployed well to support teachers. Examples of this are the ways in which teaching assistants and curriculum support workers prepare differentiated resources and intervene to support individuals and small groups of students who are falling behind their peers.
- Teaching assistants and curriculum support workers mirror the teaching methods and strategies used by the teachers to provide a high degree of consistency for learners.

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

- Members of the associate staff make some helpful contributions to the curriculum. For example, teaching assistants produce some materials for use by teachers and students, whilst many contribute to the programme of extra-curricular activities and school visits. Personal development courses led by learning mentors, such as anger management, are highly valued by those students involved.
- The overall impact made to curriculum development and enrichment by the associate staff is limited to a relatively small number of areas. There is, a sense in which the successful work of these associate staff is, to an extent, compensating for a deficiency in the school's provision. In discussion with HMI, students, especially those who work gladly with learning mentors, were clear that the curriculum is not always relevant to their needs.

The leadership and management of the reformed workforce are satisfactory.

- You and your senior leaders are developing an understanding of how the reformed workforce can be strategically deployed. For example, the role of director of student support contributes a great deal to the school as it has a clear focus on school improvement priorities.
- Staff and students have a very good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the associate staff. Strong collaborative working practices

have been established. However, these are often a result of informal communication or intuitive relationships between individuals rather than formalised procedures.

- Members of the associate staff report that they feel valued and supported. Many have received relevant training and have been encouraged to seek opportunities for career development.
- There is a commitment to assessing and managing the performance of associate staff but, as yet, the structures that link induction, training, performance management, and professional and career development are not applied coherently across the school workforce.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is good.

- Support provided by the associate staff for vulnerable groups and those for whom English is an additional language helps these students to access the curriculum effectively.
- Learning mentors make a very significant, positive and highly regarded contribution to re-engaging potentially disaffected students, or those facing personal problems.
- The attendance officer, whose responsibilities have increased, very effectively organises and co-ordinates successful systems to encourage students to be in school.
- The school nurse, based at the on-site health centre, and the attached police officer, make an appropriate and well-targeted contribution to the school's PSHE programme, in areas such as sex education and reducing crime.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- focusing monitoring systems more sharply on evaluating the impact of the work of the associate staff on students' learning
- providing a formal, coherent structure to manage performance and training in order to deploy and develop the associate staff more effectively.

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

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector