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Mrs L Frith
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Frith

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Workforce Reform: has it made a difference?

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit with Chris Wood HMI on 04 November 2008 to evaluate the impact of the deployment, training and development of the wider workforce. For the purposes of this survey inspection, the term 'wider 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of part of a lesson.

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

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

- By age 11 standards are above average with pupils making good progress, especially in Key Stage 2. There is a notable rising trend in standards since 2004. You have telling anecdotal evidence that members of the wider workforce contribute effectively to these rising standards. In sessions observed by HMI, pupils working with learning support assistants (LSAs) made good progress.
- The school's accurate and robust tracking systems show that pupils who are identified as underachieving catch up following intervention, often this is by LSAs. However, it is hard for you to quantify with certainty the contribution of these staff as there is little specific targeting or evaluation of their work in terms of pupil outcomes.

- The attendance rate is above average. This is supported by efficient systems led by administrative staff.

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

- Where there is underachievement, LSAs are timetabled carefully and very strategically to support classes and groups based on the assessed needs of pupils. The LSAs are well briefed and prepared for their support and intervention work, this can involve basic skills as well as support for pupils' personal and social development. In observed sessions, they scaffolded the learning consistently well, communicated confidently and sensitively, always ensuring that pupils understood the key points before proceeding further.
- Teachers are held accountable for the progress of all pupils in their class and speak highly of the contribution they consider is made by members of the wider workforce to this.
- LSAs are becoming increasingly constructively engaged with the learning of pupils with average and above average attainment.
- Individual education plans for pupils on the special educational needs register are very effective working documents. Their completion and monitoring is well co-ordinated by a member of the wider workforce.

The impact of the wider workforce on the quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- Teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time is covered almost entirely, and extremely productively, by members of the wider workforce who have particular expertise. A team of expert sports coaches lead excellent and varied sessions with all pupils participating actively and enthusiastically.
- The teaching, often during PPA time, and leadership of art and design across the school by an expert LSA is outstanding. As a result the art curriculum is very broad and varied. It develops pupils' skills very systematically leading to their work being of a quality above national expectations in a wide range of aspects including printing, clay modelling, drawing and watercolour.
- Members of the wider workforce are very proficient in assessing pupils' progress and using the tracking system. As a result, they know the needs of the pupils and meet them closely through interventions and programmes.
- The school offers a varied and popular range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are led or supported by members of the wider workforce.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are good.

- You and your senior staff value the work of the wider workforce highly. You are clear about what workforce reform can and cannot achieve in your school. You have put in place very effective systems to achieve your intentions.
- Performance management for the wider workforce is carried out effectively by senior teaching staff and is linked well with school improvement objectives. However, LSAs are not held sufficiently accountable for the progress of the pupils they support.

- You are able to show clear evidence of the good value for money provided by the reformed workforce. For example, administrative tasks are effectively removed from teaching staff and supply costs have reduced significantly during the period of workforce reform.
- Members of the wider workforce feel highly valued and receive very good development and training opportunities. Many have developed their careers well, and contribute constructively to aspects of school leadership and management, though there are currently no higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) or opportunities for members of the reformed workforce to act as performance management leaders.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is good.

- Yours is an inclusive school, with well organised interventions for those pupils who require additional support which is often led by LSAs.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- evaluate more closely the specific impact of the work of the wider workforce on pupils' progress and, as appropriate, include targets for this in performance management
- consider how members of the wider workforce might take on additional management tasks such as being performance management leaders.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to train and develop the wider 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

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector