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Ms M McMahon
Headteacher
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Dear Ms McMahon

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 students, during my visit on 05 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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of parts of several lessons.

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

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

- Students have attained much improved examination outcomes at the end of Year 11, due in part to very good support for students and teachers by the wider workforce. Most notably, the proportion of students attaining five passes at GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent has improved.
- Through direct teaching and support for students, the wider workforce is having a significant impact on improved standards and achievement in technology, physical education (PE) and in vocational diploma and certificate courses such as health and social care.

- The wider workforce has contributed to some improvement in standards of English since the inspection of February 2008, but there is insufficient evidence of better progress made by lower attaining students.
- The wider workforce has had an outstanding impact on improvements to behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Students recognise that the excellent work of behaviour and achievement coordinators minimises the disruption of lessons, improving their enjoyment of school.

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

- Members of the wider workforce provide very good support for teachers, both in the classroom and by taking on tasks such as administration and behaviour management, enabling teachers to focus on assessment and planning.
- Members of the wider workforce provide good teaching in a range of subjects including PE, textiles and engineering.

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

- Members of the wider workforce make a strong contribution to the school's excellent identification of students' strengths and weaknesses, in providing academic and careers guidance and in designing a curriculum which meets the wide range of needs, especially through the provision of vocational and work-related education.
- The school is making excellent use of its sports specialist status. Again, members of the wider workforce make an excellent contribution, for instance through the provision of specialist coaching.
- Members of the wider workforce make a strong contribution to the school's excellent provision of additional and extra-curricular activities.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are outstanding.

- Leaders and managers at all levels have an excellent understanding of the workforce reform agenda. The wider workforce is represented at all levels within the school's management structure. This has contributed to the very high morale of all staff, who are perceived by students as a single team of professionals having complementary roles. As a result, the school is a happy and vibrant place.
- The school has developed an exemplary model for the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the wider workforce.
- There is an excellent model for the performance management of support staff which identifies and meets training needs and encourages career development. For example, since 2006 eight staff from the wider workforce have qualified as teachers or have reached an advanced stage in training for this status.
- The school, in part through the work of the wider workforce, makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion through its extended provision, enhanced links with parents and by offering positive role models to those at risk of disaffection.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is outstanding.

- The wider workforce makes an important contribution to ensuring harmonious relationships between students of different ethnicity, gender or ability. This is recognised by students who also speak warmly of the excellent emotional support they receive from these staff, when this is needed.
- The wider workforce work with teaching staff to help ensure that students are able to improve their achievement, for example, through academic guidance and careers advice.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- focus the talents of the wider workforce even more sharply on improving the literacy skills of students working below the expectation for their age.

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

Paul Sadler
Additional Inspector