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Mr A Arnott
Principal
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Dear Mr Arnott

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 06 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 part of a lesson.

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

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

- Members of the wider workforce have played a significant part in raising the proportion of students gaining the equivalent of five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, from 14% in 2002 to 77% in 2008.
- Students can give examples of how the support of the wider workforce is enabling them to attain higher standards, for instance in English and mathematics, textiles, physical education (PE) and in vocational courses.

- Members of the wider workforce are having a good impact on students' personal development and well-being, which is good overall. For instance, as heads of year they have the time to give students individual guidance and support, and students say they enjoy school more as a result.
- The limited number of wider workforce staff currently available to help students to enhance their progress in English is restricting the progress of those with statements of special educational need.

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

- When teaching assistants are available to support students they have a good impact on teaching and learning.
- Effective work by the wider workforce enables teachers to focus on planning lessons and assessing students' progress.
- The wider workforce contributes well to enabling good use of resources and helps to overcome the poor quality of some of the accommodation.
- Due to the limited number of teaching assistants, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, do not always receive the level of support to which they are entitled.

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

- The wider workforce has a good impact on broadening the curriculum. Examples include the vocational curriculum, the provision of work experience and other work-related learning, and the provision of a suitable curriculum for students at risk of disaffection.
- Staff shortages limit the impact of the wider workforce on the curriculum for students, especially those with literacy difficulties in Years 7 to 9.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are satisfactory.

- Recent management changes, including appointments of the wider workforce at a senior level, have greatly enhanced the college's capacity for further improvement.
- The wider workforce feel they are well supported by senior leaders and, as a consequence, their morale is good.
- Arrangements for the performance management and long-term career development of the wider workforce are not sufficiently robust, but this has been recognised by senior leaders and plans are in place to address this.
- Management of the support of the wider workforce for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is currently insecure.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is satisfactory.

- The wider workforce contributes well to community cohesion by enhancing the college's engagement with parents, through welfare support, and with business and external agencies, for example through the organisation of work-related learning.
- There is insufficient capacity in the wider workforce to provide effective support to students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- as a matter of urgency, ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the wider workforce to provide the support to which students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, are entitled
- implement the good quality plans to enhance the performance management and career development of the wider workforce.

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