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18 November 2008

Mr S O'Keefe  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mr O'Keefe

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 on 03 December 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 short observations in several lessons.

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

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

- Pupils' attainment is rising and is, in most aspects at Key Stages 1 and 2, close to or above national and local averages. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), standards remain too low. Evidence from school monitoring, as well as my inspection visit, shows that teaching assistants play an important part where standards are rising. They engage pupils well especially, but not only, those who are lower attaining ensuring their improving progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good around the school and in lessons. They are active and interested learners, which is a distinct improvement on

the last inspection in July 2007. Members of the wider workforce contribute to this well by effectively supporting learning and encouraging pupils to give of their best, considering positively how their behaviour may affect others.

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

- In lessons, teaching assistants are actively involved in supporting groups of pupils, and clear about what is expected of them. Their questioning of pupils is generally good, promoting valuable learning, perseverance and progress. For example, in three classes observed teaching assistants supported practical science activities well, enabling pupils, especially lower attainers, to benefit fully from the activities.
- Individual Education Plans for pupils are well written. Teaching assistants are significantly involved in the regular and effective assessment of pupils' progress against their targets.
- Whilst being pleased with their good work, you and other senior leaders are rightly concerned that teaching assistants are too often deployed to support lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, and that teachers do not work directly enough with these groups of pupils.

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

- Members of the wider workforce lead or support some worthwhile extra curricular activities. The newly appointed computer network manager, for example, leads popular animation clubs for Years 1 to 6. In a short time, she has also enhanced the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum and facilities, in conjunction with the subject leader.
- Members of the wider workforce are appropriately involved in weekly curriculum planning in the classes to which they are attached. Following suitable training, they contribute well to guided reading sessions and specific intervention activities.
- Following a skills audit, some members of the wider workforce are using their particular expertise to enhance aspects of the curriculum in small 'pockets' of the school. However, overall the potential of workforce reform to enhance the curriculum is underused, though developing.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are good.

- You and your senior staff have a clear view of the value and potential of workforce reform. Soon after your appointment in 2007, as a result of a sound benchmarking exercise, you increased substantially the hours worked by teaching assistants and in more modest terms administrative staff. Rightly, you saw the potential value for money this could provide in terms of raising standards and releasing the time of managers and teachers. For example, the data manager now provides high quality assessment information which is becoming effectively used in lessons. Staff in the wider workforce are highly valued and the potential you saw is coming to fruition. This is particularly beneficial at a time when the school is moving towards confirming possible federation with a nearby school.
- As a result of the value placed on them by senior leaders and teaching staff members of the wider workforce feel strongly committed to the school and

its journey of improvement. The performance management system and training opportunities for members of the wider workforce are good. Induction arrangements, whilst informal, work.

- The special educational needs co-ordinator is committed and effective in her role as line manager of all teaching assistants. However, this arrangement tends to reinforce the idea that teaching assistants are principally employed to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Lesson observations by managers fully include and value the contribution of teaching assistants; these observations are improving in their evaluation of the impact of this work on pupils' learning and progress.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is good.

- This is an inclusive school, with members of the wider workforce contributing well to ensuring that all pupils, especially those more vulnerable, are highly valued.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- consider how the work of teaching assistants could be extended to all pupils, including those of average and above average attainment; and in doing this allow teachers to work more closely on a day-to-day basis with lower attaining pupils
- increase the contribution of the wider workforce to developing further an exciting curriculum.

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

As explained in the 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