

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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Mrs A Birleanu
Headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Walworth
Penrose Street
Walworth
London
SE17 3DT

Dear Mrs Birleanu

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 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 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 satisfactory.

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

- The support provided by members of the wider workforce contributes to pupils' good progress. There is clear evidence of how targeted support from teaching assistants and learning mentors helps pupils with specific learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and behavioural needs to raise their self-esteem and enjoy their learning.
- The appointment of a home-school liaison officer and the expansion of the role of learning mentors have increased the school's capacity to improve standards of behaviour and levels of attendance.

- Members of the wider workforce are very good role models for pupils and promote good behaviour in a consistently positive way. This contributes to pupils' good personal development and well-being.

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

- Members of the wider workforce are competent and hard working. They use their knowledge, skills and expertise well to support teaching. They mirror the methods and language used by teachers to provide continuity for the pupils.
- Support for targeted pupils through intervention programmes, individual support and small group work has a clear focus on improving pupils' achievement. Support for pupils within the classroom is of variable quality as the focus is often on organising activities and behaviour management rather than on furthering pupils' learning. It is of greatest value where teaching assistants have knowledge of pupils' prior attainment and when they are involved in planning.

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

- Members of the wider workforce, led by the physical education co-ordinator, operate successful after school clubs and extra-curricular activities. The before and after school clubs organised by teaching assistants are valued highly by parents and pupils.
- Teaching assistants enhance the curriculum for pupils with English as an additional language and for those with low levels of literacy by providing well planned and focused intervention programmes.
- The work of the playground leader and specialist coaches have led to significant improvements in the organisation and quality of outside play. This plays an important part in promoting learning outside the classroom and for developing appropriate social skills.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are satisfactory.

- Your leadership provides a clear focus on raising standards and promoting good attitudes to learning. You are developing an understanding of how the wider workforce can be deployed strategically with a focus on furthering pupils' learning but this is not applied consistently across the school.
- You and your senior leaders have a strong commitment to training and developing the wider workforce. There are aspects of professional development and performance management that are well developed for individuals but procedures are not applied consistently as part of a coherent cycle linked to school development planning. For example, the introduction of lesson observation for members of the wider workforce is providing some useful feedback on practice but potential links to performance management and continuous professional development have not been fully considered.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is good.

- St Paul's is a welcoming and inclusive school. There is a strong sense of cooperation amongst teachers and the wider workforce which helps to ensure that all pupils are included and their needs well met.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- focus the deployment of members of the wider workforce who support teaching and learning on furthering pupils' learning
- provide a formal, coherent structure to train and develop the wider workforce linked to school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

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

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector