

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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Mr M Barratt
Headteacher
Adams' Grammar School
High Street
Newport
Shropshire
TF10 7BD

Dear Mr Barratt

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 September to look at work in CPD.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of CPD the visit had a particular focus on how professional development activities impact on raising standards and achievement.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgement about the overall effectiveness of CPD included interviews with senior managers and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation and a short observation of a lesson.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be good.

The strengths identified

- CPD is very well planned to support the school priorities and those of departments and individual staff. Alongside this the school balances national priorities and developments well.
- CPD has continued to be fundamental in developing teaching and learning at the school and ensuring the school's outstanding success in maintaining high standards in all key stages.
- There is a very clear commitment to the professional development of all staff in the school which is acknowledged and praised by staff.

- There is an outstanding range of CPD activities which continue to be diverse. For example, lunch time sessions, opportunities to obtain higher degrees and coaching qualifications.
- There is excellent support for new staff coming into the profession. A structured programme of development is in place for the year. The support takes the form of very effective subject mentoring and the opportunity to undertake a module on reflective practice which contributes credits towards a master's degree.
- Effective use is made of training school status to establish a coherent training programme for 2008-2009 and develop outreach and collaborative work. This has included staff obtaining some form of accreditation, engaging in practitioner research and contributing to in house training. A member of the support staff has been funded to research and evaluate support staff training models in other schools with a view to putting together a cohesive programme of CPD.
- Good training is in place to develop coaching and mentoring within the school. Staff involved in 'leading from the middle' have completed mentoring modules and put these into practice. There has also been an increase in the number of student teachers joining the school.
- A very comprehensive performance management scheme is in place which includes generic school objectives, department and house objectives and individual objectives. While this is new it provides a coherent link to the self evaluation and planning cycle.
- Teachers and managers have convincing evidence of the impact of CPD. For example, the use of bursaries to allow staff to research and improve an area of learning and teaching. The assessment for learning project is an example of good practice; encouraging students to undertake both peer and self assessment and sharing key criteria with students to aid learning. Alongside this the project has focussed on improving the quality of written feedback on student work. The success of the project has led to wider dissemination within the school.
- CPD plays a key role in staff retention and ensuring high staff morale. Staff turn-over is low. Promotion and opportunities for career development are used effectively to retain good teachers and to provide them with new challenges.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- some aspects of CPD could be better managed to evaluate the long-term impact of CPD, such as the work undertaken by the two members of staff in charge of excellent lessons
- consider more rigorous evaluation and monitoring of the impact of CPD activities undertaken both externally and internally. While this is improving, there is no overview of the benefits of activities undertaken during professional development days or an overview of the quality of training undertaken last year.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop CPD in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector