

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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Miss E Smith
Headteacher
Bilston Nursery School Early Excellence Centre
Wolverhampton Street
Bilston
West Midlands
WV14 0LT

Dear Miss Smith

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 29 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 the short observation of one nursery session.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be good.

The strengths identified

- You set a clear direction for the centre and have introduced a wide range of strategies to improve the quality of provision for children and families.
- The process for identifying the nursery school's priorities and addressing them in the school improvement plan are robust. The improvement plan also identifies priorities for the whole centre. There is a good focus on resource implications and staff development in the plan.
- Very detailed planning and training on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has already taken place to prepare staff for the changes in September 2008.

- A comprehensive CPD policy ensures CPD is well planned to support the priorities of the school and individual staff. The school provides a good range of internal and external CPD. Many staff have been supported to achieve an NVQ level 4 and they confirm that their professional development needs are fully met.
- A very effective whole day training took place in September 2008 for the entire centre. This was the first of its kind. It has helped to improve communication between teams at the centre with colleagues sharing information and seeking advice and support from other teams. As a result the centre is able to offer more effective support for children and families.
- The recently introduced approach to establishing the cost effectiveness of training is very useful; ensuring each training event has a CPD cost effectiveness record. This identifies all costs incurred (travel, course cost, cover, expenses) and a staff feedback rating.
- You have some good systems in place for evaluating the impact of CPD. A monitoring timetable for the year outlines the focus of activities. Four monitoring visits have taken place in the nursery school between January 2008 and September 2008, the evidence from which shows the positive impact of changes and training. The environment is now more colourful and engaging for children. Resources are easily accessible for children to use independently and children are making choices about their learning even at this early stage of the term. There is a good combination of teacher directed and self-directed activity. Planned activities are engaging children.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- monitor the new performance management procedures for non-teaching staff and the quality of targets and objectives being set
- make more systematic use of peer coaching and mentoring.

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 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