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Ms E Longworth
Headteacher
Southam Primary School
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Dear Ms Longworth

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 21 October 2008 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 observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be satisfactory.

The strengths identified

- Improvement planning, CPD and performance management are well integrated. Teachers endorse the school's approach to agreeing common performance management objectives based on whole school issues. They understand the direction the school is taking.
- The school provides a good range of CPD activities. It makes good use of opportunities offered by the local authority and internal staff expertise to train other staff. For example, teachers training teaching assistants on the use of information communication technology (ICT).

- CPD is increasingly well matched to individuals' needs, which are based on current responsibilities. There is good support in place to develop the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders which includes mentoring from colleagues in other schools. The headteacher takes an active interest in developing the careers of staff.
- There are effective arrangements to include support staff in performance management arrangements. These are based on the National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants (NAPTA) guidelines. One teaching assistant is being supported in obtaining the Higher Learning Teaching Assistant qualification.
- Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are well supported with opportunities to observe experienced staff, seek advice from a number of staff and time is allocated to consolidate practice. They speak highly of the support they receive.
- Promotion and opportunities for career development are used effectively to retain good teachers and to provide fresh challenges. Staff strengths and enthusiasm have been fully utilised in developing ICT across the school and in developing international links.
- Teachers and managers are able to demonstrate the impact of CPD in ICT in improving the learning experience of pupils, improving links with the community and parents. The school website is an example of good practice. The class pages are informative with many links to aid learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- evaluate the impact of CPD on teaching and learning, achievement and the quality of provision by identifying at the outset the intended outcomes and approaches to monitoring
- the school integrated development plan and subject action plans are not sufficiently rigorous and as yet do not contain a sufficient focus on improving teaching and learning. There are no quantitative targets to raise achievement and standards. In some subject action plans, actions are not precise enough with success criteria not always clearly indicating how actions will be measured
- the area for improvement identified in the last inspection in April 2007, to challenge the most able has not been sufficiently addressed.

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