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Mr D Boston  
Headteacher  
Sir Thomas Boughey High School  
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Dear Mr Boston

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 18 November 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 a short observation of a lesson.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be good.

The strengths identified

- There is an excellent, widely acknowledged commitment to the development of all staff and CPD is well matched to individual needs. The school develops the strengths of individuals and provides many opportunities for staff to take on initiatives or projects. The school CPD provides overseas opportunities which are well linked to curriculum development. Study tours have been undertaken by a teacher in geography which have led to GCSE trips to Iceland and partnerships with a school in Tanzania.

- Recently qualified teachers speak highly of opportunities to organise and lead events such as the holocaust memorial and a trip to Latvia. The teaching skills of staff have been developed to ensure that students are engaged in their learning by using a variety of stimulating resources and tasks. This was seen in the history lesson I observed which demonstrated the positive impact of the individual support provided. Students were thinking for themselves about the use of sources in history and posing their own research question.
- The school's specialist status for business and the association with the Co-operative movement has brought many CPD opportunities to staff in the school. This has included links with co-operative schools in Europe and Africa. Staff value this and have worked on curriculum projects in a number of subjects such as English, drama and history. Staff have visited many Co-op schools in other countries on study visits to widen their experience and expertise. Thus the enterprise dimension is a strong feature of the school.
- This strong emphasis on individual CPD leads to good staff morale and enthusiastic staff. Staff retention is high with many opportunities for career development.
- The school provides a good range of CPD activities which involve support staff. All staff attend the annual conference and they are very positive about the opportunity this provides to work with colleagues on whole school issues. The training needs of support staff are well met and they feel included in the work of the school.
- There is a strong link between CPD, performance management and the school development plan. The performance management system is used effectively to identify targets related to achievement, teaching and learning and management responsibilities. Performance management provides staff with an opportunity to have their achievements recognised and their future needs identified.
- The management and coordination of CPD is good and aligned to the school priorities in the improvement plan. The balance between national, school and individual priorities is managed well. Staff have a clear overview of school, department and individual needs and how department issues link to school priorities.
- Newly qualified staff and trainee teachers are well supported by very effective mentors and a programme of support which focuses on developing the essentials skills of teaching and tutoring. New staff act as Year 7 tutors so they start the school with students who are also new.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of CPD are not yet rigorous enough. It is not always clear whether activities provide good value for money are cost effective and have impacted on better teaching and learning and higher standards and achievement
- measures to co-ordinate teaching and learning in order to bring about improvement are still developing. The sharing of good practice across subjects is limited.

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