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Mrs J Low  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Low

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 students, 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 students, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of parts of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of the wider workforce in your school was judged to be good.

The impact of the wider workforce on achievement and standards (including personal development and well-being) is good.

- The wider workforce is made up of teams of staff with specific roles and responsibilities that are firmly focused on raising standards and achievement. The support they provide allows teachers and managers more time to focus on improving students' learning and for planning future school development.
- Members of the wider workforce have contributed to a marked improvement in examination results and in students' achievement. There has been a 15% increase in the number of students gaining 5+ A\*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, over the last two years and

2007 data shows the school's value added score as being in the top 10% of schools nationally.

- Intervention from Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) and learning support assistants enables students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. Specific intervention in learning by specialist literacy and numeracy teaching assistants has had a significant effect in improving achievement in English and mathematics.
- The work of the wider workforce, particularly student support officers and learning mentors, has resulted in improvements in attendance. This has risen by over 2% this year. The support given to all students but especially those disaffected by education has resulted in improvements in punctuality, behaviour and in their enjoyment of school.

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

- The wider workforce and teachers work closely together to ensure continuity and consistency in learning. Teaching assistants are closely involved in lesson planning. For example, in mathematics a member of the wider workforce is engaged in detailed monitoring and analysis of students' assessments in order to plan future learning.
- Specialist literacy and numeracy assistants are knowledgeable and have high expectations of the students they support. They give very constructive guidance to students of all abilities and their clear explanations allow students to make good progress.
- In three of the four part-lessons seen students were making good progress supported by teaching assistants.
- Cover supervision is well organised. During the observation of a cover lesson the class was well managed by a cover supervisor and relationships were good.

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

- Students benefit from the help and support they receive from teaching assistants outside the school day. Students are particularly appreciative of support after school with coursework and homework. Individual students reported a two grade improvement in their coursework mark following the help they had received.
- The cross-curricular support given by the literacy assistant is particularly beneficial in helping students to transfer basic skills across subject boundaries.
- Specialist sports coaches and other members of the wider workforce contribute well to the range of sporting and other activities which enrich the curriculum.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are good.

- You, your deputy headteacher and senior leaders are committed to training and developing the wider workforce at all levels. The roles of the newly appointed student support officers are developing well and already having an impact on behaviour and attendance. Further monitoring would fully evaluate the impact they are having on students' achievement and standards including their personal development.

- Members of the wider workforce feel valued, receive appropriate training and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. However, they are still to realise their full potential as the links between the school development plan, performance management targets and the professional development of the workforce are not yet fully developed.
- Line managers of the wider workforce understand their roles well and are firmly focused on raising standards. They evaluate the contribution of the well established members of the wider workforce and can demonstrate the measurable impact of their work. However, this does not yet include the newly appointed Student Support Officers.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is good.

- The school has an inclusive ethos where members of the wider workforce feel valued and work as part of a team. Their contribution is recognised and appreciated by both staff and students.
- A range of students including several who had been excluded or who were at risk of not completing their education spoke warmly of the help they had received from learning mentors, teaching assistants and student support workers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop and clarify the links between school improvement planning, performance management and the professional development for the wider workforce
- monitor the impact of the work of the newly appointed student support officers on students' standards and achievement.

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

Ann Wallis  
Additional Inspector