

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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Ms S Weber
Headteacher
Batheaston CofE Primary School
School Lane
Northend
Bath
BA1 7EP

Dear Ms Weber

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 16 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 outstanding.

The strengths identified

- There is an excellent commitment and dedication to the professional development of all the staff in the school; this was wholeheartedly acknowledged by both teaching staff and support staff. The school is successfully building upon its outstanding reputation for CPD and your strong and determined senior leadership is ensuring that there is no room for complacency.
- CPD continues to enjoy a high school profile and it permeates all aspects of school life appropriately in order to raise standards and achievement. The thoughtful projects to raise achievement in literacy, expertly led by key staff,

are excellent examples of how the school tackles underperformance in a robust manner. The provisional test results for reading and writing in Key Stage 1 in 2008, coupled with the school's data for communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profiles, show remarkable improvement. This is as a direct result of carefully planned CPD initiatives which are monitored assiduously.

- The identification and use of a range of 'triggers' to identify CPD needs and priorities is outstanding. These operate effectively at all levels, from those arising from the needs of individual pupils and staff to whole-school issues. All staff have a comprehensive CPD needs audit which clearly identifies the most appropriate CPD activity to achieve the desired outcome. Often this is provided by using the skilled expertise available within the school which is cost effective.
- Over the years the school has developed into a genuine professional learning community where the culture of sharing best practice to get better is firmly established. The infectious enthusiasm displayed by the staff in discussions was a fitting tribute to this. Without exception all spoke with refreshing honesty about the quality of training on offer and how it had helped them to grow professionally into confident leaders of learning in their own right. Notable examples of this include the excellent leadership of both special educational needs and the innovative inclusion projects such as 'Action Plus' for pupils requiring language support. The school's excellent approach to inclusion is recognised nationally, through the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark.
- The school's admirable commitment to ensure that staff receive opportunities to shadow an experienced professional first, before assuming key posts of responsibility, is proving to be a very effective CPD strategy. All appreciate the bespoke, meticulously planned coaching and mentoring sessions which enable them to hit the ground running in their new roles. This excellent forward planning for CPD has allowed the school to respond effectively to cover temporary management positions when they arise, as exemplified by the recent acting senior leadership and the current leadership of the EYFS.
- The CPD programme is flexible to accommodate an impressive range of training opportunities for staff which encompass teaching and learning, family support and extended services, and business and administration. The Wednesday afternoon arrangement provides all the staff with non-contact time; this is impacting positively on both their morale and work life balance. Parents and carers were consulted appropriately about this change to the school day and are kept fully informed about CPD initiatives. Several are involved with CPD activities and many contribute to the excellent enrichment programme held for pupils on a Wednesday afternoon.
- There is a strong link between CPD, performance management and the school improvement plan. The performance management system is used well to identify targets, for example improving the provision for information and communication technology (ICT); an area identified in the recent Ofsted inspection. The ICT lesson observed, where highly motivated pupils used a data logger to monitor the temperature, sound and light levels in the surrounding neighbourhood before analysing the data on Google Earth, was

a fitting tribute to the swift developments made to ICT provision. I note this is one of several interesting CPD research projects that the school is involved in with Bath Spa University.

- The management and coordination of CPD are good and activities are sensibly aligned to the comprehensive school development plan. Although the internal systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of CPD are rigorous, particularly at a senior level, we agreed that developing an annual overview of the school's programme for monitoring and evaluation is an aspect for improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- develop an annual overview of the school's programme for monitoring and evaluation linked to the school development plan and CPD provision.

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

Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector