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Mr J McGowan
Headteacher
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Dear Mr McGowan

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 pupils, during my visit on Tuesday 02 December 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 pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of parts of lessons.

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

The impact of the wider workforce on achievement and standards is satisfactory.

- Teaching assistants (TA) and learning support assistants (LSA) are deployed to support individual pupils with a statement of special educational need and to work with specific groups of pupils. However, pupils do not benefit consistently from this support because there is a wide variety in the quality of practice across the school.
- Members of the wider workforce contribute well to pupils' well-being by consistently reinforcing expectations of behaviour and boosting pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

- The school has systems in place to assess and track pupils' achievement but these are not yet used fully to monitor and evaluate the contribution that members of the wider workforce make to pupils' learning and well-being.

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

- Members of the wider workforce who support teaching and learning are committed to improving achievement. They establish good relationships with the pupils they support.
- There is wide variation in the way teachers and members of the wider workforce who support teaching and learning work together. Individual members of the wider workforce make a satisfactory, and sometimes good, contribution to supporting teaching and learning because they are very committed, experienced and know the pupils well. However, the majority are insufficiently involved in planning work and in assessing and recording pupils' progress. The recent introduction of regular meetings for TAs, and the circulation of daily internal newsletters and the minutes of staff meetings to members of the wider workforce are very positive initiatives to improve communication and provide opportunities to identify and share good practice amongst members of the wider workforce.

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

- Planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for teachers is organised to allow them to meet as a year group and plan the curriculum together. This ensures consistency and provides an opportunity to share knowledge, skills and resources.
- The knowledge, skills and expertise of members of the wider workforce are not being used to enrich the curriculum in a planned and coherent way. Where individuals are proactive and supported by senior managers they can make a significant contribution. For example, the project to raise boys' achievement in reading is well planned, linked to school improvement priorities and capitalises on the skills and interests of an experienced TA. The boys involved in this scheme clearly enjoy their reading sessions and their confidence and interest in reading has grown.
- The poor condition of the buildings and playgrounds limit opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are satisfactory.

- Workforce reform has not progressed in line with national expectations because the school lacks a coherent rationale for the deployment, training and development of the wider workforce. Despite this, individuals make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school because they are very committed, experienced and know the pupils well. The newly appointed senior leaders have a clear vision of how to develop the full potential of the wider workforce and use some existing good practice to move forward.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is satisfactory.

- Alderman Richard Hallam is a caring school where every child is valued. Members of the wider workforce provide encouragement and support particularly for those pupils with additional needs or who are vulnerable.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- providing a clear rationale for the deployment, training and development of the wider workforce linked to school improvement priorities
- involving LSAs and TAs more in planning work and recording and assessing pupils' progress
- using the knowledge, skills and expertise of members of the wider workforce to enrich the curriculum in a planned and coherent way
- monitoring and evaluating the contribution that members of the wider workforce make to pupils achievement and well-being.

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

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector