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Ms D Ajose
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Ajose

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 20 January 2009 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 five 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 is good.

- The support provided by members of the wider workforce contributes to students' good progress. Targeted support from teaching assistants helps students with specific and moderate learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and behavioural needs to raise their self-esteem and enjoy their learning.
- The team of learning supervisors has increased standards of behaviour and levels of attendance by providing continuity of learning.

- The learning supervisor working within the physical education department is deployed effectively to improve the achievement of specific groups, for example through providing additional challenge for gifted and talented students and supporting those with English as an additional language.
- Members of the wider workforce are very good role models for students and promote good behaviour in a consistently positive way.

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

- Members of the wider workforce use their knowledge, skills and expertise well to support teaching and learning. They mirror the methods and language used by teachers.
- Targeted support through intervention programmes, individual support and in the specialist support unit has a clear focus on improving students' achievement. The quality of support from members of the wider workforce for students within the classroom is more variable. The direction, focus and purpose of support is not consistently focused on furthering students' learning. It is of greatest value where teaching assistants have knowledge of students' prior attainment, when they are involved in planning and where there are shared expectations of their roles and responsibilities.
- The proforma for teaching assistants to provide written feedback on the outcomes of support is not clearly related to students' progress.

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

- The deployment of teaching assistants in key stages, and learning supervisors in curriculum areas, allows these staff to increase their knowledge and skills and provide greater continuity of support to teachers and students.
- Curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 has been extended very effectively through the employment of instructors to teach motor vehicle maintenance, construction and hairdressing. This has had a significant impact on the achievement of students who are better suited to vocational pathways. Their motivation and self-esteem has increased and they benefit from good opportunities for further study at local colleges or in the sixth form, or entry to apprenticeships and employment.
- Teaching assistants enhance the curriculum for students with English as an additional language and for those with low levels of literacy by providing well planned and focused intervention programmes.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are good.

- Your leadership provides the wider workforce with a clear focus on raising standards and promoting good attitudes to learning. You and your senior leaders have a strong commitment to training and developing the wider workforce at all levels.
- There are good opportunities for members of the wider workforce who support teaching and learning to contribute their views and ideas, to evaluate the effectiveness of their support and to identify training needs. For example, regular meetings are held for the learning supervisors and for teaching assistants.

- The business manager and learning support manager provide a clear direction for improving the leadership and management structure of the wider workforce. There are good opportunities for personal and career development. Posts have been developed to allow individuals to progress and take on additional responsibilities, such as senior teaching assistant and team leaders, as well as new roles matched to developing areas of the school's work including the key worker and sixth form study assistant.
- There are aspects of professional development and performance management of the wider workforce that are well developed for individuals. However, procedures are not applied consistently and the link to school self-evaluation and development planning is not yet transparent or well established.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is good.

- Prospect is a welcoming and inclusive school. There is a strong sense of cooperation amongst teachers and the wider workforce which helps to ensure that all students are included and their needs well met.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that support within the classroom is always sharply focused on furthering students' learning
- linking procedures for the performance management of the wider workforce to school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

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