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Dear Ms Cornish

Ofsted survey programme: evaluation of Reforming and Developing the Workforce

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 19 March 2007 to evaluate the impact of reforming and developing the workforce

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 judgements made included: interviews with staff and scrutiny of documentation.

The overall effectiveness of reforming and developing the workforce in your school was judged to be good.

Impact on standards and the outcomes of Every Child Matters

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the school workforce on standards and the outcomes of Every Child Matters is good.

- The work of the attendance officer is having a positive impact on attendance.
- Intervention by classroom support assistants is raising attainment.
- Learning mentors who support pupils on vocational courses at colleges are contributing to their improving success.
- The Learning Base, and the contribution of learning mentors to its work, is ensuring that pupils at risk of exclusion are encouraged to complete their education and to succeed in their studies.

Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the school workforce on the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, fewer lessons to cover and the removal of examination invigilation duties mean teachers have more time to plan lessons and assess pupils' work and have greater opportunities to collaborate together and share good practice. All of which are leading to improvements in teaching and learning.
- The work of classroom support assistants and learning mentors in supporting pupils enables teachers to plan for more differentiation in teaching and learning and thus to meet pupils' individual needs and to personalise learning more effectively.
- This, together with greater access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the contribution of the multi media resource centre, contributes to the improving quality of teaching and learning.

Impact on the quality of the curriculum

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the workforce on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- Better provision for cover enables teachers to attend relevant external courses, for example on BTEC programmes, leading to improvements in the curriculum that meet the needs of pupils more effectively.
- Better provision for cover and gained time resulting from the removal of examination invigilation duties from teachers provides greater opportunities to improve liaison with primary partners, leading to better transition arrangements for pupils in Year 7.
- Gained time also enables departments to engage in collaborative self review and more effective planning leading to improvements in the curriculum provision within subject areas.
- The alternative vocational curriculum provided for some pupils is well supported by learning mentors who monitor their attendance and behaviour.

Leadership and management in relation to reforming and developing the workforce

The quality of leadership and management in relation to reforming and developing the school workforce is good.

- The headteacher's understanding of, and commitment to, remodelling is a major contributor to the success of the school in its strategic implementation of the remodelling agenda.
- Remodelling has enabled effective delegation to take place, leading to a greater focus on teaching and learning and the more effective use of time at each level of management.
- Middle leaders are more accountable and more opportunities are provided for leadership roles within the support staff structure.

- Improved ICT provision is having a positive impact throughout the school – in relation to curriculum provision, monitoring of pupils' progress, data analysis and administrative activities.
- Monitoring of some remodelling actions has taken place, for example of cover arrangements, and key staff are generally aware of the impact of remodelled actions within the school, but, in general, little formal evaluation of the impact of remodelling on the quality of provision has been undertaken.

Impact on training and managing a reformed workforce

The quality of training and development in relation to reforming and developing the school workforce is good.

- Annual review procedures for support staff, equivalent in quality to those for teachers, are embedded in the school's review cycle.
- Training and continuing professional development are at the heart of the school's planning for improvement.

Impact on inclusion

The impact of the strategy to reform and develop the school workforce on inclusion is good.

- Non teaching staff contribute well to the support provided to ensure that all pupils, and in particular vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, have every opportunity to access the curriculum and meet their learning needs.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- evaluate the impact of remodelling on the quality of education provided for pupils in order to inform future improvement planning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to reform and develop the school 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 Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector