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Mr David Hoggins
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Dear Mr Hoggins

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 to Farnham Heath End School on 28 and 29 of 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. 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: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of documentation, lesson observations and analysis of assessment data and results over recent years.

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 has been good overall, and achievement and standards are rising.

- Standards are slightly above average when pupils join your school at the beginning of Year 7 and close to average at the end of Key Stage 3. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2006 were above average and, you

believe, the best ever for the school. The progress that pupils made was satisfactory: low results in one of the core subjects at both key stages are the main factor preventing pupils from making good progress. There have been recruitment and retention difficulties that have prevented you from strengthening teaching in this area, but these problems are being resolved, putting you in a strong position for the future.

- Lower attaining pupils are supported well in school by the learning support assistants (LSAs). These pupils are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress.
- Overall, girls achieve better than boys and the gap is increasing.
- Other aspects of the Every Child Matters agenda have been promoted well. Pupils feel safe in the school and value the support and help they receive from their teachers and members of the wider workforce. The Student Support Services staff play a significant part in this. Pupils also praise and value the work of the positive attitude development (PAD) counsellors, who help them through difficult times in their lives, such as bereavements.
- The positive relationships between teachers, the wider workforce and the pupils contribute to their emotional well-being.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are generally positive. Your questionnaires and my interviews with them establish that they generally enjoy and value school. Pupils who find their academic targets challenging respond positively to the help they are given. The support and guidance they get from support staff raises their self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community through the opportunities they have to take part in the decision-making process. They are closely involved in the restructuring of the school pastoral system into houses rather than year groups and are positive about the coming move to vertical tutor groups. Members of the wider workforce make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the pastoral system, acting as deputy heads of year/house. All pupils are helping to choose the names of the new houses and some are aware of how they will be grouped into houses to make them equal in terms of academic and sporting prowess.
- The progress pupils make in literacy, information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy means that they are being prepared well for their future economic well-being. LSAs and other support staff are effective in helping selected less able pupils to raise their attainment. The ICT technician, with his industrial ICT expertise, helps many pupils to master complex ICT problems.

Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

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

- The school has made good progress in freeing teachers from routine administrative tasks in order to help them to teach more effectively.

There is some evidence that the preparation undertaken by teachers during planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time is contributing to improvements in teaching and learning, although not all staff use this time for its designated purpose. They may hold meetings, liaise with parents or make work-related phone calls instead.

- Teachers are presented with useful and easily understood data read-outs that are raising their expectations of what their pupils should be achieving, based on their prior attainment.
- Departments are using assessment information effectively to focus on the areas of pupils' work that are in need of improvement. Examples were seen in English of detailed analysis of pupils' writing to highlight strengths and weaknesses, and this is shared fully with pupils. The short term targets for improvement that result are useful in helping to raise pupils' attainment.
- Evidence was seen in Humanities of marking which is more thorough and effective as a result of the greater time available to teachers. The marking is detailed, and again sets short term targets identifying what pupils need to do to improve their work. Pupils value this and it is helping to improve results.

Impact on the quality of curriculum

The impact of the strategy on the quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The LSAs have particular expertise, in teaching pupils with learning difficulties for example, which has contributed significantly to the curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school has begun to value the expertise of the wider workforce and is using it to a small extent to enhance the range of extra-curricular activities. There is a good range of these and some run with the support of the wider workforce. Activities such as cricket and netball are run by coaches, and pupils say how they much they have benefited from their expertise.
- Individual pathways, which allow the curriculum for older pupils to be adapted to meet their needs for work placements or alternative school hours, are successful, and these run more effectively because of the flexibility that workforce remodelling has provided. Some pupils, who were previously poor attenders, are now achieving better and attending more regularly as a result of initiatives such as PAD and the 'alternative curriculum'.

Leadership and management of reforming and developing the workforce

Leadership and management of the strategy have been good.

- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the principles of workforce reform and development and have had a commitment to it since its inception. It was planned for as part of a raft of initiatives that could be used to remodel the school and the way it works to make it a more effective teaching and learning institution.
- The school has made good progress in implementing all phases of the workload agreement although there has not been a clear, carefully planned strategy for monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives such as the introduction of guaranteed PPA time.
- The key aim of the remodelling agenda, to raise standards for all, has been addressed. There have been successes. There has been an increased emphasis on the use of pupil performance data to raise attainment. Under the direction of the headteacher and the senior leadership team, the focus has been on ensuring that all pupils make adequate progress and that teachers are both aware of the school's expectations and accountable for their pupils' results.
- The data manager is making an effective contribution to the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in the school, by providing the information needed to analyse pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching. Pupils know their targets and parents are given the information they need to track their children's progress. This has led to improved motivation and standards.

Impact on training and managing a reformed workforce

The impact on training and managing a reformed workforce is satisfactory.

- The school has a good number of inclusive systems for the performance management and continuous professional development of all staff. Teaching assistants feel valued and some are involved in additional training, which could lead eventually to qualified teacher status. The performance management process is well structured, efficient and effective. Teachers and the wider workforce have good access to training opportunities and these relate well both to school priorities and identified individual needs.

Impact on inclusion

The impact of the strategy on provision for inclusion is good.

- Teaching assistants work in class and with small groups to support targeted pupils effectively. They are also involved in booster classes and revision lessons, helping to raise achievement. Other support staff make a significant contribution to this work, promoting attendance, health and liaison with families.
- Good consideration is given to the deployment of support staff to support vulnerable children. These pupils recognise and value how they have

been supported, testifying to how their confidence and self-esteem has been raised.

Areas for improvement

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

- consider how the deployment of the wider workforce and the additional PPA time could be used to address the gender imbalance in GCSE results by, for example:
 1. monitoring marking to ensure that boys are set short term targets with clear success criteria and rewards for achievement
 2. monitoring teachers' planning to ensure that it includes a wide range of learning strategies, including practical activities, and good use of ICT to motivate and interest boys.

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

Paul Cosway
Additional Inspector