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Ms Nicola Arundell  
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Dear Ms Arundell

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Deploying, training and developing the reformed workforce

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 October 2007 to look at work in deploying, training and developing the reformed workforce. For the purposes of this survey inspection, the term 'reformed 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 interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work, and observation of two groups taught by teaching assistants and one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of the reformed workforce was judged to be good with some outstanding features.

The impact of the reformed workforce on achievement and standards, including personal development and well-being, is good.

- Despite low starting points, all pupils reach standards that are near or above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The teaching assistants and the learning support assistant contribute significantly to pupils' progress through carefully planned and targeted support.
- Teachers and teaching assistants set pupils challenging targets, making effective use of assessment data, and monitor their progress carefully.
- You provided evidence of the impact of targeted intervention from teaching assistants. For example, in 2006 a group of pupils following the ten week 'Hi Five' literacy support programme, planned and taught by the teaching

assistant working with Year 5, had progressed by one level or above in reading and at least two levels in writing.

- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being by encouraging them to learn to understand their feelings and to develop their social and communication skills. There is a strong commitment to racial equality and to developing an appreciation of the diverse cultural backgrounds that make up the school community.

The impact of the reformed workforce on the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Learners make exceptional progress as a result of the effective working practices between teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of teaching and learning in the groups observed was good. Activities matched very well to the needs of more able pupils with English as an additional language were very effective. Teaching assistants mirrored the methods and strategies teachers used to provide a high degree of consistency for learners.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to use their knowledge and skills, gained through relevant and good quality training, to support learning.
- Excellent relationships are being established with parents and carers in order to help them support their children's learning. A project for the parents of Somali pupils, of which the school has an increasing number, makes very good use of the knowledge and skills of the bilingual teaching assistant.

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

- In the groups observed during the visit, it was clear that learners enjoy their education because the curriculum is well matched to their needs.
- Teaching assistants contribute effectively to provision for English and mathematics because they have a good level of knowledge and skills. These have been developed through relevant training on national programmes and strategies from the special educational needs coordinator, the coordinator for minority ethnic pupils, and the English and mathematics curriculum leaders.
- There is a clear expectation that all staff will contribute to curriculum development. Teaching assistants will play a part in the school's plans to expand opportunities for developing the creative curriculum, a key priority in the school development plan and the focus of a recent in-service training day.

The leadership and management of the reformed workforce are good.

- You and your senior leaders have a clear commitment to training and developing the reformed workforce as an integral factor in raising achievement in the school.
- The information in the staff handbook on the role of teaching assistants and their effective deployment is very useful. Lesson observations of teachers also refer to the management of other adults in classes. Although collaborative working practices have developed with individual teachers, there are limited opportunities for teaching assistants to share their good

practice with each other or, as a group, to contribute ideas to school development planning.

- The reformed workforce has access to relevant training and some are active in seeking opportunities for career development, but there is no explicit match to the school's priorities. For example, teaching assistants are developing knowledge and skills through external training when there is already expertise within the school which could be disseminated.
- You are committed to assessing and managing the performance of teaching assistants but, as yet, there is no coherent process to link induction, training, performance management, and professional and career development to school self-evaluation and improvement planning. The evaluation of their deployment, workload and effectiveness, undertaken in the summer term 2006, is a useful starting point.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is outstanding.

- There is a strong sense of collective identity amongst staff who work together as an inclusive team. This has an impact on pupils' feelings of security and well-being within the school community.
- The reformed workforce makes a significant contribution to developing links with the community and increasing the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- creating opportunities for teaching assistants to share their good practice with each other and to contribute ideas, as a group, to school development planning
- providing greater coherence between the induction, training, performance management, and professional and career development of the reformed workforce and school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the reformed workforce 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

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector