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Mrs Judith Sharman  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Sharman

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 06 November 2007 to evaluate the impact of the deployment, training and development of 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 discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and observation of learning in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6.

The overall effectiveness of the reformed workforce in your school was judged to be satisfactory with some good features.

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

- Standards are broadly average and nearly all pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress because the help provided by teaching assistants is closely focused on their learning. However, the potential of the reformed workforce to improve the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and higher attaining pupils is not fully realised.
- The reformed workforce makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Support staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively because they have received comprehensive training and apply strategies consistently. Consequently, behaviour is good.

- The SAFE (student assistance for everyone) group sessions are run efficiently by teaching assistants. Pupils spoken to during the visit understand how to stay safe and know help is at hand.
- The learning mentor greets pupils at the school gates, which improves attendance and punctuality.
- The teaching assistants and learning mentor are often involved in supporting children and their families beyond the school day. The parents' groups offering advice on managing behaviour are very well attended.

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

- Good relationships between all staff create a friendly ethos which increases pupils' enjoyment and desire to learn.
- The learning support assistants are effective in helping pupils with learning difficulties to work alongside their peers.
- Teaching assistants who provide support in class and in withdrawal groups keep daily records of pupils' work but are unsure how their support contributes to their overall progress.
- The reformed workforce encourages and supports pupils. Occasionally, pupils are offered too much help rather than being enabled to try for themselves.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils with learning difficulties and the reformed workforce helps to ensure that they have full access to it. However, similar support is not readily available for the more able pupils.

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

- The reformed workforce contributes well to the curriculum by taking responsibility for particular aspects. For example, the 'together time' sessions include singing and listening to stories. Pupils enjoy these sessions but it is not always clear what they are expected to learn.
- The individual talents of the reformed workforce are used well to enrich the curriculum through activities such as working in the school's allotment, needlework and sport.
- Additional training enables the reformed workforce to contribute to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff working in this area know the importance of learning through practical activities.

Leadership and management of the reformed workforce are satisfactory with some good features.

- The learning support assistants and teaching assistants are responsible for providing intervention programmes that contribute to pupils' achievement. Their impact has not been evaluated fully and the tracking of pupils' progress indicates that some have not benefited from this support.
- The bursar makes a significant contribution to the management of the school by providing effective support for you.
- You have used the recent amalgamation as an opportunity to rationalise staffing. Appointments were matched carefully to school development

priorities, such as the appointment of a member of staff with skills in information and communication technology to develop the school's web-site.

- The performance management of teaching assistants encourages staff to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, but this is not followed up with observations of their practice or a formal appraisal of their effectiveness.
- Opportunities for the reformed workforce to contribute to the school's self-evaluation are not fully developed. As a result, they are not as clear as they might be about the school's overall performance.
- The school encourages the reformed workforce to advance their skills. Several members of staff have gained qualifications from training in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is satisfactory.

- The reformed workforce supports pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This includes accompanying pupils on residential visits.
- The learning mentor and other staff work closely with the many newcomers to the school, including parents and pupils who speak English as an additional language, to help them settle in the community.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- using the expertise of the reformed workforce to improve the progress of higher attaining pupils
- further evaluating the impact of the reformed workforce on pupils' learning
- involving the reformed workforce more in school self-evaluation so that they are clearer about the school's overall performance.

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

Jennie Platt  
Additional Inspector