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Mr S Calvin  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Calvin

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 04 June to look at work in CPD.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of CPD the visit had a particular focus on how professional development activities impact on raising standards and achievement.

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 judgement about the overall effectiveness of CPD included interviews with senior managers and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation and the short observation of two lessons.

The overall effectiveness of CPD was judged to be good.

The strengths identified

- The process for identifying the school's priorities and addressing them in the school improvement plan are robust. Issues identified in the last inspection report have been tackled and are integrated into the improvement plan.
- The school's CPD process is well documented and is linked well to performance management and the school improvement plan. The percentage of students obtaining an A\* to C grade at GCSE has been improving and by end of Year 11 students make good progress. In

recognition of its CPD work the school has successfully been accredited with the Leading Aspect Award.

- There is a very clear commitment to the professional development of all staff in the school which is acknowledged and praised by staff. CPD is very well planned to support the school priorities and those of departments and individual staff. Alongside this the school balances national priorities and developments well. The central theme 'enhancing the learning culture' is the key driver for CPD and all that the school does.
- There are an outstanding range of CPD activities. For example, twilight sessions, external courses, whole day CPD with high quality trainers and the development of cross school coaching. The partnership with other local schools is well developed and has brought many benefits. These include sharing of expertise, resources and staff. This provides very good value for money. The CPD programme is also responsive to needs that develop throughout the year.
- CPD has continued to be fundamental in developing teaching and learning at the school. It is a key priority in the school improvement plan and the yearly CPD programme. Impact cross the school is evident in the higher percentage of lessons that were good or better in 2007/08 in comparison to 2006/07. Integral to this improvement has been the strong focus given by the school on improving behaviour. The school is a calm and orderly place.
- Performance management contributes well to the identification of individual needs. Demanding targets are set for teaching and support staff to raise attendance, raise reading ages and improve achievement. Assessment for learning is a whole school target but individualised for staff as part of their performance management. Staff are encouraged and supported in gaining qualifications and attending courses outside their immediate work or areas of responsibility. For example, a mathematics teacher attending a cricket coaching course and a teaching assistant undertook the graduate teaching programme in the school and is now a newly qualified teacher.
- The school's involvement in national initiatives and strategies has been successful. The school is a Leading Edge school which has led to the establishment of precisely focused CPD in developing the use of new technologies in the curriculum. The success of this has seen the delivery of innovative practice, for example homework sent via texting and the use of animation software by students. Assessment for learning training has led to the development of assessment in curriculum areas with examples of good practice in history and physical education.
- CPD plays a key role in staff retention. Staff turn over is low. Promotion and opportunities for career development are used effectively to retain good teachers and to provide them with new challenges. Many staff move into promoted posts.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure success criteria in the school improvement plan reflect the rigour by which the school judges the impact of strategies such as those used to improve teaching and learning and develop the use of ICT in all curriculum areas
- continue to develop and extend the various approaches to coaching to improve and develop staff performance.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop CPD 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

Davinder Dosanjh  
Her Majesty's Inspector