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Mrs C Allen
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Allen

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Workforce Reform: has it made a difference?

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during our visit on 23 September 2008 to evaluate the impact of the deployment, training and development of the wider workforce. For the purposes of this survey inspection, the term 'wider 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 part of a lesson.

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

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

- Members of the wider workforce make a significant contribution to the achievement of specific groups of pupils through carefully planned and targeted support. Pupils with speech and language or learning difficulties and disabilities and those attending booster classes and 'catch up' make very good progress.
- The learning mentor contributes well to pupils' achievement by raising their self-esteem and improving attitudes to learning.
- The school is developing systems to assess and track pupils' progress but these are not yet used consistently to monitor and evaluate the contribution that members of the reformed workforce make to pupils' learning.

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

- Strong relationships between members of the wider workforce, teachers and pupils underpin effective teaching. A consistent approach to classroom management results in exemplary behaviour.
- The very good work of the learning mentor supports pupils' learning very well especially at Key Stage 2. The volunteer teacher provides a very good level of challenge to pupils in Year 6 and furthers their enjoyment of mathematics.
- The deployment of the reformed workforce although very well matched to raising the achievement of targeted groups, is not currently based on a careful assessment of the needs of all pupils.

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

- Aspects of the curriculum have been broadened and deepened by the contribution of some members of the wider workforce. For example, support for speech and language development is very effective in allowing pupils to engage more successfully with learning both within and outside the classroom.
- Weekly sessions delivering behaviour management through tactile experience with respect and Pilates are highly valued by pupils, teachers and parents.
- The curriculum provides very good opportunities for learners to progress and develop well, although the potential of members of the reformed workforce to enhance the curriculum is not yet fully realised. This shows in the supervision of lunchtime play or the provision of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for teachers.

The leadership and management of the reformed workforce are satisfactory.

- You and your senior leaders are developing a strategic understanding of how the reformed workforce can be deployed to improve pupil achievement and to allow the excellent practice in some areas to be applied to all pupils.
- Strong collaborative working practices have developed between staff leading to a shared focus on improving achievement. However, there are limited opportunities for members of the reformed workforce to share their good practice with each other or, as a group, to contribute ideas to school development planning.
- There is a commitment to managing and developing the wider workforce but, as yet, the structures that link induction, training, performance management, and professional and career development are not fully developed.

The impact of the reformed workforce on inclusion is good.

- St Mary's is a very welcoming and inclusive school. There is a very strong commitment from all staff to ensure all pupils are valued as individuals and their needs are well met.

- The high quality support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language helps to raise their self-esteem and to engage more successfully with learning.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing ways in which the contribution of the wider workforce can be monitored and evaluated and used to inform a strategic overview of deployment
- developing links between the training, performance management and professional and career development of the wider workforce that are clearly matched to improvement planning.

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

Anne Wellham
Her Majesty's Inspector