

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



14 January 2008

Mrs G Whaling
Acting Headteacher
Marsden Community Primary School
Percy Street
Nelson
Lancashire
BB9 0BE

Dear Mrs Whaling

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 my visit on 26 November 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 wider workforce in your school was judged to be good.

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

- The support provided by teaching assistants in science at Key Stage 2 is contributing to pupils' progress. Teachers are able to use time gained from additional support to provide booster sessions for the more able pupils.
- Members of the wider workforce make a significant contribution to the very good progress pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make through providing and monitoring the work that is identified in their individual education plans.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide additional support for literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2.

- Pupils with English as an additional language often make very good progress because bi-lingual assistants are readily available to translate work when required.
- The work of learning mentors and the school secretary are contributing to improvements in attendance and punctuality. Good attendance at the breakfast club organised by teaching assistants also improves punctuality and ensures pupils get a good start to the day.
- Members of the wider workforce contribute very well to pupils' personal development. They are excellent role models and reinforce the school's behaviour policy very effectively. They help to encourage healthy lifestyles by running many sporting activities as well as organising physical activities at lunchtime.

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

- Teaching assistants and the learning mentors provide some excellent individual work to support pupils' learning such as introducing new vocabulary and concepts. They also provide strategies to control behaviour and help pupils remain on task.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to the assessment of pupils' work in their daily records that evaluate pupils' progress. They also give good feedback to pupils as they work.
- Effective deployment of the wider workforce provides additional time for teachers to plan together. Teachers' planning identifies what teaching assistants are to do but they do not always see this early enough to suggest how they might be able to adjust the work to match the needs of the pupils they support.

The impact of the wider workforce on the quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

- The extended provision managed and run by the wider workforce plays a major role in enriching the curriculum and linking the school with the community. Evaluation of the impact of this provision is excellent. The school has clear evidence that pupils who are involved in one or more of the extended services have improved their attendance and attainment.
- Teaching assistants and the learning mentors run a wide range of clubs including art, skipping and the fathers and kids club. These activities strengthen links with the community. A good example is the activities organised for pupils who were fasting during Ramadan.
- Every two weeks a day of well planned, creative activities is organised by the wider workforce and includes music, a modern foreign language, sport and social skills. This enriches the curriculum and provides time for teachers to plan, prepare and assess pupils' work.

The leadership and management of the wider workforce are outstanding.

- Very close attention is given to the impact of the wider workforce on pupils' academic progress and personal development. Detailed records are maintained so the school can evaluate whether an intervention or activity is helping pupils to improve.

- Management of the extended services, including the sports and arts centre, is excellent and the quality of this provision has been recognised with national awards.
- Training and performance management for the wider workforce are well established to link to the school's priorities for improvement as well as enabling individuals to develop their knowledge and skills and progress their careers.
- Close monitoring and evaluation of cost effectiveness ensures that spending on the wider workforce provides good value for money.

The impact of the wider workforce on inclusion is outstanding.

- Marsden is a very friendly and inclusive school. Members of the wider workforce make a significant contribution to establishing strong community links.
- Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide high quality support for the more vulnerable pupils, those with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties.

An area for improvement, which we discussed:

- involving teaching assistants more in lesson planning so their knowledge and skills can be used to match the work to the needs of the pupils they support.

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

Jennie Platt
Additional Inspector