

1 December 2010

Mrs A Pontifex
Headteacher
St John Bosco Arts College
Stonedale Crescent
Croxteth
Merseyside
L11 9DQ

Dear Mrs Pontifex

Ofsted 2010–11 good practice survey: value for money in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation and that of your staff during my visit on 9 November 2010 to look at how the school achieves good value for money.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews and discussions with various members of staff and a representative of the governing body; discussions with students; viewing of video materials; and scrutiny of documentation.

Features of good practice

- An exceptionally clear and corporate sense of educational values and purpose; nothing is pursued that cannot be related directly to this sense of mission.
- Careful planning and preparation of proposed developments based on clear analysis of students' learning needs.
- Key risks associated with projects are identified along with strategies for dealing with any eventualities.
- An emphasis on developing internal capacity and reducing dependence on external expertise, most notably for the purposes of staff development, while securing higher-quality outcomes.
- Careful oversight of budgets and expenditure by the governing body and leaders and managers.

- Very effective use of a wide range of benchmarking tools; financial, performance-related and qualitative.
- A flexible approach that responds rapidly to changing circumstances, including contingency planning for major developments.
- The widespread involvement of members of staff in making decisions to ensure that available expertise is used most effectively.
- Keen awareness of the relationship between activities and students' progress and attainment informed by careful analysis of data.
- Good use of students' views to inform planning and evaluation.

Areas for development

- There are no significant areas for development.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector