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Mr T Kapur CBE
Executive Headteacher
West Trafford Learning Partnership.
Ashton-on-Mersey School
Cecil Avenue
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Dear Mr Kapur

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: leadership of more than one school.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 and 17 November 2010 to look at the leadership of the West Trafford Learning Partnership. I would particularly like to thank the students for their warm welcome throughout my visit.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to a national report. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributors or contributing institutions but individuals and institutions will not be identified in the main text without your consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, staff, parents, the director of children's services for Trafford, the Chief Executive of the Manchester United Foundation, the school improvement officer and students; and the scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The effectiveness of the federation leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is outstanding.

Context

Ashton-on-Mersey and Broadoak are secondary modern schools within the fully selective borough of Trafford. About 44% of Trafford students attend selective grammar schools. Both schools have mixed catchment areas although Broadoak is located within an area of high social deprivation and with a high percentage of young people not in employment, education and training. Ashton-on-Mersey School has been graded outstanding across four inspections. Broadoak School was performing significantly below national

expectations across a range of performance indicators. With the support of the local authority, a hard federation was formed between the schools in 2006. In its last inspection report, in 2008, Broadoak was graded as a good school with outstanding features.

Outcomes

- Outcomes have improved for students at both Ashton-on-Mersey and Broadoak schools following the establishment of the West Trafford Learning Partnership: this has been particularly marked at Broadoak. Although Ashton-on-Mersey school attained a deserved reputation over many years as an outstanding and innovative school, a key impact of the federation has been to move Broadoak from barely adequate to a good and improving school with outstanding features. GCSE results have improved significantly and the progress students are making is outstanding. In particular, the narrowing of the attainment gap for those students on free school meals has been significant at both schools.
- Attendance rates have improved and, in both schools, the percentage of leavers who are not in employment, education or training has been greatly reduced. New opportunities have been developed for Broadoak students while Ashton-on-Mersey learners have also benefited from newly established and outstanding provision at Broadoak: this is a federation fundamentally based on the equality of the participating schools. One student crisply summarised the change, 'At first there were a few difficulties, but now you don't notice.' Another added, 'we kind of help each other out'.
- Students spoke with confidence and growing enthusiasm about their innovative learning opportunities ranging from deconstructing and reassembling car suspension systems in the motor mechanics workshop to the advanced planning for a new retail outlet shop on campus.

Provision

- The sharing of expertise, outstanding practice and resources have strengthened teaching and learning. The training school, with currently 18 teacher trainees, is a prime motivator in continuing an enhanced spirit of innovative teaching and learning.
- Pioneering collaboration, through outstanding partnerships such as with the Manchester United Foundation, has greatly enhanced the curriculum and cemented innovative work across the federation. Some of these initiatives have been extended to develop local community projects. The development of outstanding vocational and sports facilities and provision at Broadoak are key elements in the transformation of that school.
- A strong tradition of care and support has been maintained while guidance systems have been strengthened across the federation. Parents spoke with passion and pride about the contribution of the federation to both schools.

Leadership and management

- The governors at Ashton-on-Mersey School were persistent in their determination to form a federation with Broadoak School. In overcoming numerous obstacles, they always remained aware of the challenges in federating with a school with low attainment, poor resources, low esteem within the adjacent communities and falling rolls. Their exceptional foresight, expertise and strategic planning have been a cornerstone of the federation's outstanding success. They immediately became as committed to the pursuit of excellence at Broadoak as they were at Ashton-on-Mersey.
- In this endeavour, they had the significant advantage of your exceptional entrepreneurial, managerial, leadership and inter-personal skills. Governors appointed swiftly and you developed two outstanding headteachers with responsibility for each school. Your strengths and skills and those of the two headteachers have provided the other cornerstone of the federation's success.
- Overcoming some challenging times, you have established high-quality senior, middle, support, resource and teaching teams across the federation. Staff are encouraged to innovate and are thus empowered; they relish accountability. Staff, at all levels, give enthusiastically and generously of their considerable talents for the benefit of the federation and its students.
- Thorough quality assurance systems are fully embedded across both schools. Highly effective financial and resource management has strengthened the federation. Self-evaluation processes are thorough, accurate and challenging.

No areas for improvement were identified that are not already in the process of being tackled.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of the federation.

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

May I take this opportunity to wish you, your staff and students and all involved in the West Trafford Learning Partnership continued success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty
Her Majesty's Inspector