

19 January 2011

Mr A Birchall
Headteacher
Byrchall High School
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Dear Mr Birchall

Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: school governance

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 16 and 17 November 2010 to look at school governance.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in school governance. The publication will include case studies about individual schools. If Byrchall High School is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment prior to publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the identification of features of excellent practice included: a review of documentation, meetings with a range of governors and staff along with discussions with some pupils.

Features of best practice

- Governors are fully committed to doing their very best for the school and its pupils. Working in close partnership with the headteacher, they have successfully developed a culture of trust, confidence and openness, where challenge is understood and accepted.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise to their roles which are used to good effect.
- Governors are provided with a good range of information related to the school's work, including regular pupil progress reports and reports about the quality of teaching across the school.
- The two main governor committees are used well to provide both challenge and support to senior school leaders.

- The level of engagement with the students is improving continually, for example governors attend student council meetings regularly, take on board the views of the student interview panel when making appointments and have recently introduced the role of a student governor.

Areas for development

- Consider further ways to identify and engage with hard to reach parents.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to further develop governance.

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

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector