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Mrs S Cowans  
Headteacher  
Philip Morant School and College  
Rembrandt Way  
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CO3 4QS

Dear Mrs Cowans

**Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: assessing pupils' progress (APP)**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 13 October 2010 to evaluate the impact of the APP initiative.

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: scrutiny of documentation; observations of teaching and learning; and discussions with senior leaders, other staff and pupils.

The overall use of assessment to support learning is good. APP has helped the school to further develop a sound and coordinated approach to improving teaching, learning and assessment.

**Impact on pupils' achievement and attainment**

- The increased accuracy and clarity of teachers' assessment, arising from improved confidence and understanding, are contributing significantly to improving achievement and raising attainment.
- The use of APP in the core areas has enabled good practice to be refined and shared in helping pupils to maintain and in many cases accelerate their progress by the focused and sensible use of meaningful targets.

**Impact on the quality of pupils' learning and progress**

- Effective use of APP is enabling smooth and good transition for pupils entering the school and college and at key transition points such as from Key Stages 3 to 4.

- APP strategies are enabling pupils to evaluate their own learning in class, develop their confidence and understanding of their own performance and participate effectively in peer-assessment.
- Pupils report that having simple, timely and understandable information about their performance with clear targets is having a positive and beneficial impact on their learning and progress.
- Helpful and precise feedback on how to improve, based on evidence of meaningful data and good knowledge of sequenced learning, is resulting in improved learning and progress.

### **Impact on the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning**

- The school provides prompt and appropriate support and takes other necessary actions through effective use of data developed from APP criteria.
- Sound implementation of APP clearly shows gaps in pupils' learning and skills that the school tackles well through tailored help within its intervention programme.
- Links between planning and assessment have been strengthened by APP, resulting in schemes of work and lesson plans being more closely matched to pupils' needs.
- The system of academic monitoring supports the school's regular and informative progress checks to help and improve assessment of learning.
- Teachers, through the data being readily available, have a good awareness of pupils' prior learning and capabilities that helps them plan lessons and next steps more effectively.
- Feedback to pupils is encouraging and informative. Comments are helpful; marking is clear but does not consistently show precisely enough how to improve learning.
- The system for moderating assessment within faculties is now well established.

### **Impact on the curriculum**

- By using the APP approach and data on pupils' background the school is building a curriculum that is pupil-centred. The flexibility of the 'Pathways' approach is opening the curriculum and ensuring more appropriate opportunities that meet pupils' needs.
- APP has helped teachers to develop a good range of assessment opportunities which in turn the school is using to inform curriculum development.

### **Areas for development, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that the sharing of good practice, already in place, is fully embedded and used across all areas

- making sure that all teachers explain precisely to pupils how to improve their learning within each subject area
- continuing to review and improve the attainment of girls.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop assessment practice in support of school improvement.

As 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

**Peter Green**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**