

19 November 2010

Mr G Tinker  
Headteacher  
Kingsmead Community School  
Wiveliscombe  
Somerset  
TA4 2NE

Dear Mr Tinker

### **Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: school governance**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 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 Kingsmead Community School is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment before publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the identification of features of best practice included: discussions with four members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, the clerk, and representatives of Student Voice; and scrutiny of a range of documents, including the minutes of meetings of the full governing body and of its committees.

### **Features of best practice**

- The governing body works very effectively within a school climate of openness and honesty that enables governors to fulfil their role very well.
- The governing body is very well organised and its committees provide the key forum for challenging and supporting the leadership of the school. These committees are involved closely in drawing up the school development plan and in monitoring progress with its priorities.
- Governors are passionate about the school and contribute a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience. They ensure that they are well informed about the school's work and undertake appropriate training as necessary.

- Governors expect initiatives to be considered carefully and discussed in full. They subsequently provide strong support as well as rigorous scrutiny through the appropriate committee.
- The views and ideas of the students are considered carefully through the representative of the Student Voice on the student services and pastoral committee. Students feel that they are listened to and that they make a real contribution to improving the school.
- Governors' open days provide them with planned opportunities to gather first-hand information about the school at work three times a year. These days play a key role in enabling the governing body to contribute strongly to the continuing improvement of the school.

**Areas for development, which we discussed, included:**

- creating a more systematic and planned approach to developing governors' skills and gathering parents' views.

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

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

**Grahame Sherfield**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**