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4 March 2011

The Chair of the Governing Body through
Mr M Roffe
Principal
Wymondham College
Wymondham
Norfolk
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Dear Mr Roffe

Inspection of Wymondham College on 2 and 3 March 2011 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school with Lucy Martin HMI on 2 and 3 March 2011 and for the information which you provided during our visit. In particular, please thank the students who found time to speak with us.

The inspection was an unannounced visit undertaken by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in response to issues raised in a qualifying complaint made to Ofsted under section 11 of the Education Act 2005. Following investigation into the complaint, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector took the decision that an inspection of the college should take place to follow up the whole-school issues raised in the complaint. Inspectors sought to establish whether the college has clear strategies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. In particular, inspectors evaluated the impact of policies relating to behaviour, bullying, and health and safety; the effectiveness of links with key agencies; and whether students feel that they have suitable access to help and support when they need it.

Inspectors observed the college's work, including a sample of lessons. They scrutinised a wide range of policies and documents relating to students' welfare and safety, including safeguarding documentation. They met with the Principal and nominated staff, and spoke formally and informally with groups of students.

Inspectors found no evidence of wider whole-school issues raised by the qualifying complaint. The college has clear policies and appropriate day-to-day procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of students, including those relating to health and safety, behaviour and bullying, and meets all its statutory duties in regard to safeguarding. The complaints policy sets out clear procedures for parents to follow if



they wish to pursue a formal complaint. The policies and procedures are suitably reviewed and updated regularly. The college has well-established management responsibilities in relation to child protection that are understood by staff at all levels. Robust procedures are in place to ensure that adults working with students are appropriately recruited and vetted. High-quality training on safeguarding is provided for all new staff, and also as part of a rolling programme of continuous professional development. Staff are clear about the protocols and procedures for safeguarding and child protection. Up-to-date guidance is provided for all staff, alongside individual support, as necessary, to assure the welfare and safety of students. For example, following minor issues raised in the boarding review in the autumn term, training for all staff on e-safety was implemented in January. This guidance has ensured that staff develop a better understanding of the possible dangers posed by new technologies and can adopt a consistent approach to ameliorating potential risks.

The college has good procedures for monitoring its policies and ensures that the governing body is kept appropriately informed and up to date. In addition, there are good strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of its work to promote students' safety and welfare. For example, the annual boarding review effectively identifies strengths that can be replicated more widely and also possible areas for improvement. The college has well-established procedures to seek the views of students and parents through various councils, forums and occasional surveys. Nonetheless, it recognises that more effective use could be made of 'student voice' to review the effectiveness of its provision, including teaching. The college is sensibly looking to develop a more efficient system for collating centrally the wide range of information recorded across the school in order to better evaluate the impact of its work.

The college makes very effective use of external agencies to support its work. Excellent links with local services enable the college to seek specialist advice and guidance, even on apparently minor concerns, so that suitable referrals can be made promptly to the relevant agencies whenever necessary. Safeguarding concerns are recorded clearly and accurately and are shared appropriately, both internally and with other agencies. The college's recent change to academy status has not affected the effectiveness of this work.

The college provides suitable levels of supervision for students but also gives them clear guidance on how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum addresses key aspects of safety through the 'Learning for Life' programme, as well as work in tutor periods and through assemblies. Students are routinely encouraged to adopt safe and responsible practices in lessons and in their extra-curricular activities, and are alert to potential risks and dangers. Significantly, a climate of trust exists within the college wherein students feel confident to seek advice or support swiftly from their peers and from staff. Although the initiative to develop peer mentors has stalled, many students spoke warmly about the family feel of their community and the support that they draw from this. Students recognise what constitutes bullying and



say that staff take very seriously the occasional incidents that occur. Students are clear that bullying will not be tolerated and feel confident that incidents are resolved properly.

Students' positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their learning and personal development. The college sets high expectations for students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Students develop as articulate, reflective and considerate young adults in an environment which fosters their skills and interests, and builds their self-reliance and independence. The boarding houses each have different approaches to developing these personal qualities, but trusting relationships between adults and students are a notable strength of the college. Students feel confident that any concerns they might have will be taken seriously and that issues will be resolved quickly and effectively. They are confident that there is always an adult with whom they are happy to talk, both in the boarding house and in school, even about difficult or sensitive issues. The college works closely with outside agencies to offer additional support and guidance, for example through counsellors, an independent listener and initiatives such as the Matthew Project. Students know how to use these external contacts and value them either because they have experienced the service or because they are reassured that there are specialists to whom they can turn if they ever have serious concerns.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker
Her Majesty's Inspector