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30 September 2011

Mr P Talbot
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Dear Mr Talbot

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: a review of anti-bullying practice in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 22 September as part of our survey of schools' work to create a positive school culture and prevent and tackle bullying. This visit had a specific focus on how the school community works together to prevent and tackle bullying of disabled people and those with special educational needs.

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.

This letter briefly summarises our discussion at the end of the visit.

Strengths of this aspect of the school's work

- Students and staff create a very welcoming atmosphere and take an obvious pride in the school. The expectation that all members of the school community will treat each other with courtesy and consideration is shared by staff and students. This was an evident strength of the school at break and lunchtime during the visit where students treated each other and staff in a friendly and respectful manner.
- High expectations of both academic achievement and personal development underpin the relationships between staff and students. Students appreciate the way in which staff spend time getting to know about their interests and concerns. The one-to-one meetings that students

have with a member of staff before starting at the school help to set the tone for this type of lasting relationship. Being treated as 'growing adults of equal worth' was frequently cited by students as a reason why behaviour was good at the school.

- The school receives additional resources to provide teaching expertise and support for students with physical and sensory disabilities and for students with specific learning disabilities. By taking into account the needs and views of students, programmes of education and support are divided between the main school and the resource centre with increasing amounts of time in the main school. All students spoken to during the visit felt they were full and valued members of the school community with access to the full range of different opportunities offered by the school.
- Students are skilled and confident in voicing their opinions and reported that the school took their views seriously. Understanding about people's differences is enriched by the openness of students within a diverse school community. There is an understanding that students take on responsibility for their own behaviour. Those students who find this difficult have access to a wide range of in-school support and support from external agencies.
- Some parents of students with special educational needs, who had recently left the school, were extremely complimentary about the way in which the school listened to their views and helped their children to succeed. This, they believe, was due in part to the very clear expectations for learning and behaviour for all students but also an understanding, supportive attitude when students made a mistake with their behaviour and required help to learn and understand how to prevent it happening again.
- Inclusive, cross-year projects provide students with different abilities and from different year groups opportunities to work together, thus breaking down any barriers. Students are given many opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and to work as part of a team. They learn to appreciate the skills and talents of others. The work of the arts department plays a strong role in this and music and drama projects are also used to involve partner schools which are particularly popular with students soon to start at the school.
- Systems for dealing with inappropriate behaviour are well-understood and students reported a high level of consistency even though teachers had very different styles. Strong explicit policies for behaviour and bullying help to focus students on self-discipline and taking responsibility for their own actions. These are clearly cross-referenced to other policies and protocols at the school and help to establish clear links and a consistent approach.
- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, are monitored carefully so that any patterns and trends, for example for particular students or groups of students and particular times of the day, can be

identified and inform future work at the school. Governors are informed and take an active role in helping the school to evaluate this area.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using the school's knowledge about bullying and less positive interactions between students to develop further areas of work across the curriculum to ensure that all issues of prejudice and discrimination are included in the same depth as racism is currently
- increasing opportunities for inclusive projects using the Campus Council and build on the already sound foundation for enabling students to consider the views of all people within the wider campus community.

I hope that this visit has been useful in the further development of this aspect of the school's work.

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. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson
Her Majesty's Inspector