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Mr J McNerney
Headteacher
St Peter's RC High School
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Dear Mr McNerney

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 30 September 2011 as part of our survey of schools' work to create a positive school culture and prevent and tackle bullying.

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

- Induction processes are thorough. Year 7 are well prepared for their arrival, especially those who come from the key partner primary schools. Students know the expectations and what to do if they are being bullied. Those who join at other times are given a buddy and are well informed about the school, the rules and who to go to for support before they start. As a result, the students have a high level of confidence in the school and support its ethos and values.
- The school's curriculum provides very well for students' personal, social and moral development. There is weekly personal, social, citizenship and health education for all students together with highly effective use of the religious education programme to promote key ideas. Theme weeks and additional days are also used very effectively to promote particular aspects of behaviour and anti-bullying. For example, the Exceeding Expectations programme tackling homophobia and the recent programme in Year 7 on cyber-bullying have had a significant impact in raising awareness of individual responsibility and students' use of language. Links to schools in

the USA looking at gang culture and the unit of work on Travellers, delivered through Years 7, 8 and 9 help students to gain a very broadly based understanding of diversity.

- The school community is strongly cohesive. Students speak positively about diversity and respect for each other. The majority clearly recognise that racism and other forms of discrimination will not be tolerated by the school.
- Students generally have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They understand their responsibility not to collude with bullying and often express a willingness to intervene to protect someone who is being bullied. The school is continually developing its approaches to counter bullying such as cyber and homophobic bullying.
- There is good provision of safe spaces such as the library, the lunchtime club room and the patio, where students who want a quieter and more protected break and lunch can go. Staff support and activities are available.
- There is strong evidence that, during their five years in the school, students benefit substantially from the school's work to help them build respect for each other and develop their interpersonal skills. There is a common thread about respect which emerges from discussions with staff and students, indicating a good deal of agreement over shared values.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the way in which the school records and reports on bullying and other behaviour incidents to include information about the basis of the bullying such as perceptions about disability, sexuality or race
- analysing the data provided so that patterns about places, times and other circumstances can improve the school's understanding of victims and contexts and the impact of strategies to address changing issues
- drawing together the various positive elements of behaviour, anti-bullying and anti-discrimination activity into one coherent, overarching policy and strategy, clearly linked to the school's vision and values.

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

John Peckham
Her Majesty's Inspector