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Ms D James  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms James

**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 with my colleague Eileen Mulgrew HMI on 24 November 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**

- You have set a clear example of how staff and students should interact. This has ensured that students say that staff respect them and there is a very strong positive family ethos within the school. Students are very well behaved and considerate of each other. The school celebrates the natural exuberance of the boys while ensuring that they have an excellent understanding of how to work well and achieve together.
- The curriculum is very well planned so that it ensures that students have an excellent understanding of diversity. For example, some Year 10 students explained how much they were enjoying the work they were doing with the National Ballet in devising and performing a dance based around boxing. Highly relevant topics are introduced to respond to local

events, for example work on the implications of the riots which took place over the summer or the problems with gang and knife cultures.

- The school prepares and supports students well when they arrive from their primary schools. The support for students who have had a chequered school career and arrive at times other than in Year 7, often having been excluded from a number of other schools, is excellent. These students settle down well into the school. Last year, the proportion of all Year 11 students who did not progress to education, employment or training was very low and well below the local and national figures.
- The school has clear policies and procedures to reduce bullying. These identify the need to support both the student who has bullied and the student who has been bullied. The school recognises the need to support students who bully to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind their actions and enable them to change their behaviour.
- Students have a good understanding of their rights to a good education and they are able to explain what their responsibilities are to ensure all can achieve. Good use is made of display around school. Students respond very well to the positive ethos of praise and the rewards available, with many explaining how they were saving towards a 'big' reward. They commented that this is highly motivating and they enjoyed being videoed within the 'praise pod'. As one student commented, 'It is just like being on Big Brother'. The school closely monitors the use of rewards to ensure equity between different subject areas.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- evaluating the impact of the excellent work done in reducing bullying incidents by categorising the different types of incident and reporting to the governing body
- extending the recording of incidents to identify the work the school does in supporting both the victim of bullying and the perpetrator, including follow-up activities to demonstrate that there has been a favourable resolution.

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

**Michael Smith**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**