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Mr R Bellfield  
Principal  
Craven College  
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Dear Mr Bellfield

**Ofsted 2011/12 best practice survey: supporting college students to progress and achieve**

Thank you for your warm welcome and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 9 and 10 February 2012 to look at your work in supporting students to progress and achieve.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in supporting college students. The publication will include case studies about individual providers. If your college is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment prior to publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included scrutiny of documentation, electronic independent learning plans and the enterprise zone, and meetings with senior managers, course team leaders, support staff and students.

**Features of good practice observed**

- Course team leaders display very considerable commitment to supporting their students in academic and pastoral matters.
- The creative use of curriculum mapping of general topics frees time for other activities that support the development of students' wider skills and holistic growth.
- Innovative use of the enterprise project involves students with specialist staff who work for external organisations and helps them to develop their entrepreneurialism and employability skills.

- The much-improved and interactive virtual learning environment (VLE) in some subject areas enables students to learn and helps them to know how to achieve higher results.
- Very useful one-to-one tutorials in some subject areas, in which student and tutor agree and set personalised targets, are reviewed frequently and aid each student's progress.
- Good extra tuition helps students to manage their own concerns and areas for development and prepares them well for examinations.
- Good support from student services' mentors helps students to overcome a wide range of concerns and so stay on course and progress to further courses.
- Creative use of college-produced information, advice and guidance leaflets supports the topics covered in students' awareness days very effectively.

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

- improving the quality of students' target-setting in individual learning plans in all subject areas, so that all students are motivated and enabled to progress and achieve
- increasing the proportion of tutorials which are observed so that managers are aware of their quality and consistency and their value for students
- improving the consistency of the content and use of the VLE so that all students in all subject areas may experience the high-quality VLE used so effectively in some subject areas.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your approaches to providing support for your students. As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

**Shaun Dillon**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**