

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6644
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr C P Turner OBE
Principal
Brixham College
Higher Ranscombe Road
Brixham
Devon
TQ5 9HF

Dear Mr Turner

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 19 October to look at work in ESD.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with students, teachers and other staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation; and an analysis of students' work.

The overall effectiveness of ESD was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

Students' standards and achievement in ESD are good.

- Students at all ages have a good understanding of sustainability, at an appropriate level, and can discuss a range of related issues and present well-argued opinions.
- Many students have a good understanding of complex issues that require balancing a range of different arguments and evidence, such as those related to the environment, fair trade and the impact of sourcing food locally on both the local community and other countries.

- Students have a very good understanding of rights and responsibilities, and needs and wants, and can relate these to people living in different parts of the world. They have a good understanding of how individual actions can have an impact at a local, national and even global level.
- A good proportion of students are involved in work on behalf of the school and in the wider community. Many are involved directly in the college's extensive international links and the outcomes of these are used very well across the whole college community.

Quality of teaching and learning

No overall judgement is made on the overall quality of teaching and learning as no observation of teaching took place. Only a small amount of completed written work on topics contributing to students' knowledge and understanding in the subject was looked at. This contributed to the judgement on students' understanding of ESD issues.

Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good.

- The college's audit indicates that key curriculum areas, for example, geography, science, design and technology, and citizenship provide good opportunities for students to develop relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. Other curriculum areas also make useful contributions to ESD. However, these are not co-ordinated well.
- The college has a discrete programme for citizenship that makes very good use of a range of ESD issues to provide a context for developing students' skills and understanding. This draws well on students' work in other areas of the curriculum to develop their understanding of, for example, global issues.
- The college's excellent attention to the needs of all individual students and 'personalising learning' equips students well with the key skills and attitudes required to develop their understanding of ESD; for example, decision making and problem solving skills, balancing evidence and opinions, communication and listening skills.
- The wide range of extension and enrichment activities make good use of students' interests in aspects of sustainable development and contribute towards their achievements in this area.
- The school environment is used well as a context for learning, for example, the building management systems; as a result students are very well informed about the need to reduce energy and water consumption. There is a good focus throughout on the need to reduce, re-use and recycle.
- The good programme of work-related learning also makes good use of local organisations involved in sustainable development and environmental management.

Leadership and management of ESD

Leadership and management is good.

- The college has been quick to make use of the opportunity presented by its inclusion in this subject survey to make an accurate evaluation of its provision for ESD.
- Although there is currently no overall policy or strategic planning in relation to ESD, the college's philosophy and ethos is entirely sympathetic to the sustainability agenda. For example:
 - students' involvement in decision making; for example, through the School Council and the nutritional advisory group
 - the focus on developing all learners as individuals within a climate of mutual respect that results in students having good awareness of the impact of their actions on others
 - the relationship with the local and wider community, including through its Specialist Arts College status
 - how the college uses its status as a Full Service Extended School
 - the extensive and well used international links.
- The school is very well placed to further improve provision for ESD.

Inclusion

The provision for inclusion is outstanding.

- The attention given to the needs of all individual students, not just those in identifiable groups, is outstanding. This is demonstrated well through the focus on 'personalising learning', the care given to individuals, high quality student support systems, the multi-agency approach on site, and matching the curriculum well to the needs of students.
- Excellent attention is given to developing students' self-esteem and self-confidence and ensuring that they have the skills to take responsibility and manage their own learning.
- There is open access to an extensive range of extension and enrichment activities and participation is impressive.

Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- develop a clear overall framework to co-ordinate the college's approach to ESD and to ensure that different contributions are complementary to ensure progression in students' understanding.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop ESD in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority/Local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector