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Ms Jeanette Dawson
Principal
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Dear Ms Dawson

Ofsted Survey Programme - 2006/07

Aspect: The contribution made by CoVEs to the development of vocational work, including preparation for the specialised 14-19 diplomas, in schools.

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 21 November 2006. I am particularly grateful to Bill Meredith for his hard work in preparing the programme and background documentation and giving up his time during the visit. Please pass on my thanks to other staff who gave up their time to talk to me.

The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice survey into CoVEs' work with schools. Where published reports cite specific aspects of good practice it is usual practice to name the colleges involved. However, where reports identify common issues which represent barriers to progress, individual colleges will not be named.

I agreed to provide a summary of my observations including the good aspects of the provision and any areas for improvement.

- The college has a well established and flexible 14 to 16 programme that is highly regarded by schools in the region. The programme is expanding as a result of its reputation, especially at level 2. Managers have considerable experience of working in partnership with schools and there is a team of teachers with expertise in teaching students aged 14 to 16.
- The college has very good specialist resources to support a land-based diploma. Examples of resources that are directly attributable to the CoVEs include the mechanical horse, a virtual learning environment that is part of a rural enterprise centre and the extension to indoor riding arena.

- Bishop Burton College and all other 14 to 16 providers across the East Riding and in Hull are adopting standardised procedures for reporting and quality assurance across the region. This is good preparation for the introduction of the land-based diploma and is a good foundation for future joint working.
- The college has good networks and contacts across the land-based sector enabling it to play a key role in the development of the new specialist diploma in the region. A senior manager is involved in the development of the new diploma at national level, providing the college with up-to-date information and an opportunity to influence the shape and content of the new qualification. The college is also involved in a number of high profile groups that have an influential membership drawn from across the land-based industry. The reputation of the college is enhanced by its CoVE status and the college has gained experience of partnership working through the Equine CoVE, which has a national role in the dissemination of good practice.
- Senior managers have valuable experience of working with many different learning area partnerships (LAPs). The new deputy principal has previously led a Gateway bid for the construction specialised diploma. This experience will be invaluable when preparing the bid for a land-based diploma.

Area for improvement, which were discussed, included:

- progression rates from the 14 to 16 provision to post-16 courses at the college are low. Last year only 17% progressed onto full-time courses at the college. This proportion increases to 29% when work-based learning is included.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the ways in which your CoVE supports 14-19 curriculum development in the area.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your LLSC and will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of the half-term following the visit. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector