

28 March 2007

Mr David Henley  
Principal  
Kingston Maurward College  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
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Dear Mr Henley

Ofsted Subject Survey Programme 2006/07

Sector Skills Area 3: Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 22 March 2007. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for all your hard work in preparing the programme and background documentation and giving up a great deal of their time during the visit. Please also pass on my thanks to all the staff and learners who gave up their time to talk to me.

The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice subject survey in agriculture, horticulture and animal care. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but should we wish to include specific aspects of practice we will contact the college first. All college letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform judgements included: interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of good practice examples.

I agreed to provide a summary of my observations of good practice seen in animal care and equine and to suggest some areas for development.

Good practice observed included:

- good use of extensive resources, including the farm estate and commercial ventures, as well as information and learning technology to support learning and teaching
- strong emphasis on involving students in the learning process, including peer teaching, extensive use of feedback and the use of student observers during equine practical classes
- innovative use of peer coaching to provide an additional perspective on the quality of teaching and learning

- good partnership with a local school in a 'making films for learning' project where school pupils make films for media study courses using college student activities which then form part of the college's resource base
- good initiatives to promote healthy eating through the use of food diaries linked to tutorials and visiting speakers
- innovative use of mobile phone technology for the assessment of work- based learners through recorded texts, digital pictures, video clips and voice recordings.

Areas for development, which we discussed, included:

- continue to develop ways to raise the profile of additional themes such as equality and diversity and key skills during vocational lessons.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop land-based courses in the college.

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. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jo Parkman  
ALI