

04 April 2007

Mr Peter Crompton
Principal
Pendleton College
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Dear Mr Crompton

Ofsted Subject and Survey Inspection Programme 2006/07
Sector Skills Area 2: Science and mathematics post-16

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on 19 March 2007. I am grateful to your staff for all their work in preparing the programme and background documentation and giving up their time during the visit. Please pass on my thanks to staff and learners who also gave up their time.

The visit provided much useful evidence for the good practice survey in science. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but should we wish to cite 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, analysis of learners' work, observation of seven lessons and many meetings with ex-students and external interested parties.

I agreed to provide a summary of my observations of good practice seen in the sciences.

Good practice observed

Learners' achievement

- Success rates in physics and chemistry are very good to outstanding at AS/A2 and GCSE level.
- There is much value added, students generally do better than predictions based upon their entry qualifications.
- Students perform well in lessons and in all the work set for them.
- Students are attentive, hard working and do much additional work outside of lessons.

Teaching, training and learning

- Teaching is very good to excellent.
- Lesson planning is meticulous.
- Objectives are clearly set and referred to during lessons.
- Teachers are very well prepared and manage the learning experience well.
- They have a lively, enthusiastic delivery style.
- There is much good questioning and testing of understanding.
- A wide variety of appropriate teaching and learning strategies are used including a considerable amount of ILT.
- Differentiation in lessons is good.
- There is a wide enrichment programme that enlivens students' studies.

Programmes and activities

- A wide range of GCSE and GCE level subjects is offered and are highly popular.
- A BTEC national diploma is in the planning stages.
- Very good relationships exist with the local schools and higher education providers.

Guidance and support

- There is much work on initial testing and identification of students with learning difficulties.
- Highly effective support arrangements exist both in and outside of lessons.
- There is very close liaison between science teachers and support workers.
- Students underperforming are assiduously followed up.
- Target setting with students is used effectively.
- There is much celebration of students' performance.
- All students are valued equally and there is much help for those from minority backgrounds.

Leadership and management

- Assessment of students' work is frequent and consistently applied.
- Learners have a clear understanding of their targets.
- The science section is exceptionally well led and managed.
- Excellent communications exist.
- All staff are fully aware of their duties to share good practice.

- Annual self assessment by subject is thorough.
- Action planning is simple but effective.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop science 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

John R Phipps
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools (Retired)