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Mr Don Smith  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Smith

Ofsted survey inspection programme – a comparison of the effectiveness of post 16 providers

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29-30 October 2007 to look at work in level 3 provision.

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: discussions with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observation of lessons.

The overall effectiveness of level 3 provision was judged to be satisfactory, with many good features.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory.

- Students enter the sixth form with standards below those found nationally. They make satisfactory progress, but AS-level and A-level results are, overall, below national averages. Attainment of grades A and B is well below national results.
- The large majority of students complete the courses they begin and gain at least pass grades in the subjects they study.
- Increasing numbers continue into the sixth form. In 2007, almost two in three students stayed on – the highest percentage in recent years.

## Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and they use it well to plan lessons effectively and maintain a brisk learning pace. Too much talking by teachers sometimes restricts discussion in the limited lesson time available. Fewer lessons in most subjects in Year 13 compared with Year 12 limits Year 13 students' access to good teaching.
- Relationships with teachers are very good. Students respond well to the teaching and say they enjoy learning.
- Students receive helpful guidance and direction about how to improve their work. Teachers are very committed to students, and give individual help and advice freely in and out of lessons.
- Teachers, tutors and the head of the sixth form monitor progress carefully with the help of a new system which compares students' current performance with that expected from their previous attainment. Students say they find the half-termly reviews helpful. They know the academic targets that they are aiming to reach, and their work is helpfully assessed and marked, usually with clear indications of how it could be improved. The new system has not run long enough for its impact on achievement to be evaluated.
- Individuals who fall behind are supported well. In addition to teachers and tutors, a recently appointed teaching assistant is fully deployed in the sixth form to give individual help to those requiring assistance in organising their time and managing their workload.

## Quality of curriculum

The curriculum for level 3 courses has improved considerably and is good.

- The range of courses includes some valuable vocational options, reflecting the school's specialist status for business and enterprise and local employment opportunities. Students say they enjoy learning and are sure their studies will benefit their future educational and career aspirations. They find induction to level 3 courses informative.
- Fewer lessons are timetabled in most subjects in Year 13 than in Year 12, on the grounds that Year 13 students are more mature and able to use private study time more effectively. However, achievement is not yet better than satisfactory.
- Regular educational visits take place to enhance learning.

## Leadership and management

The leadership and management of level 3 provision are good.

- Leaders have a shrewd understanding of the quality of performance and are intent on raising achievement and standards. Many more students are gaining the confidence to stay on to take level 3 courses. The curriculum has

improved considerably. Weaknesses in subject leadership have been overcome. Generally good teaching ensures good progress in most lessons. The accommodation has been improved. There is good capacity to improve provision and outcomes of level 3 courses further.

- Collaboration with other educational providers extends students' choice of courses. However, the timetables of different providers are not coordinated well enough to enable every student to attend all the necessary lessons in different locations. A system to guarantee the quality of education in partner institutions is not yet in place.

## Inclusion

- The school meets the needs of girls and boys from different social and ethnic backgrounds very well. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in line with others. Students get on well together and attitudes in lessons and to the school are very positive. Students have equal access to level 3 courses.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that the new system to track students' progress is monitored and evaluated, so that changes can be made, as necessary, to increase its impact on raising standards
- comparing and evaluating the impact on achievement and standards of providing most Year 13 courses with fewer lessons than are allocated to Year 12. If necessary, provide additional tuition when resources can be made available
- making collaboration with other educational partners fully effective by coordinating the timetables of different providers to avoid students missing lessons, and establish a system to guarantee the quality of the education received by Paget High School students in partner institutions.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop level 3 provision in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Tony Beaver  
Additional Inspector