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Mr S Sangha
Principal
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Dear Mr Sangha

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 and students, during my visit on 10 December 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: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation and analysis of performance data.

The overall effectiveness of level 3 provision at post 16 was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

- Standards are good as, results in 2005-06 for 16-18 year old students on long courses were well above the national average. Although results for 2006-07 appear to have declined, results are still awaited. However, retention rates for this group declined by nine percentage points when compared to the previous year.
- Good results for students over 19 years of age have been maintained with success rates at the national average for further education colleges.
- There is much improved progression to higher education courses and the internal progression from one level to another is good.

Quality of teaching and learning in level 3 provision, including academic guidance

- Teaching is generally very good and there is effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Interactive learning technology (ILT) is used extensively during lessons. Some lessons lack variety in the activities used.
- Students receive much useful help prior to starting courses, during induction and throughout their time at the college.
- Targets are set for students, but many of the resulting actions are too vague and not well planned.

Quality of curriculum

- The extent to which programmes and activities meet students' needs and interests is good. Planning effectively takes into account students' prior knowledge and abilities.
- There is a wide range of vocational courses available and good enrichment activities. Unfortunately there are some students who are unable to make use of the enrichment programme because of timetabling clashes.

Leadership and management of level 3 provision

- Leadership and management are good and self-evaluation is effective. Managers have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses which effectively informs improvement planning.
- Quality assurance systems are well established, understood by all and are effective in promoting improvements.
- There are high quality resources, but social areas for students are in need of further development.
- Links with local schools, colleges and universities are excellent.

Inclusion

- Educational and social inclusion is excellent. Staff are well aware of how individual students achieve. Teachers monitor and track individual progress well.
- There is much useful work in promoting respect between individuals of different faiths. Equality and diversity have a high profile in college life.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- continuing to review the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all staff add appropriate variety and relevance to their work
- improving the action-planning regime with students.

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

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

John R Phipps
Additional Inspector