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Mr David Horn
Headteacher
Beckfoot School
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Dear Mr Horn

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 3 and 4 December 2007 to look at the 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 observation of five lessons.

The overall effectiveness of level 3 provision was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

- Students achieved very good A level results for the last three years given their starting points. Achievement is outstanding, as shown by value added scores provided by the national system used by the school.
- The average UCAS point score is better than that for the local authority, but below the national average.
- Retention by subject is not routinely calculated.

Quality of teaching and learning

- There are very good to excellent working relationships in lessons. Students apply themselves and respond well as a result of some very lively and enthusiastic teaching. Effective starter activities engage learners at the beginning of lessons and there is a great deal of effective help for individuals

and groups. There is good concentration on what students have to do to improve their work.

- Support for students outside lessons is excellent. Parents are involved effectively in supporting learning.
- There is some variability in the quality of lesson plans, and the use of interactive learning technology (ILT) is underdeveloped.
- The school sets challenging targets for students.

Quality of curriculum

- There is a wide range of level 3 academic courses, and effective working takes place with confederate schools. New courses and subjects are introduced to match students identified needs, such as the fast tracking of AS level in languages in the lower school.
- There is a good range of enrichment activities and the curriculum enables students to enjoy their learning.

Leadership and management

- Leadership and management of curriculum are excellent and there are highly effective links with other schools.
- Improvements in teaching and learning are at the centre of school life and are supported by a highly sophisticated target setting process.
- The school's self-critical culture results in an accurate and formative self-evaluation cycle which includes the careful consideration of students' views.
- There are excellent lines of communication and team spirit.

Inclusion

- There is a wide mix of backgrounds in the sixth form and all are treated equally and with respect.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring that lesson plans are consistently good, including planning to meet the full range of student needs
- making more innovative use of ILT
- improving UCAS points scores to better than the national average and evaluating retention rates by subject.

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

Dr John R Phipps
Additional Inspector