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Mr J Hassell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hassell

Ofsted survey inspection programme: Curriculum Innovation

Thank you for your hospitality and helpfulness and that of your staff and students during my visit on 17 October 2007 to look at curriculum innovation.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports may list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. Feedback letters are published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements reached during the survey includes interviews with staff, lesson observations, assessment of facilities and resources, and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

The overall effectiveness of the curriculum was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

One of the school's conspicuous strengths is the emphasis placed on what each child or teenager will achieve with expert help and not on what will always be out of reach. Clear and specific individual learning goals are set, linked to the national framework of Early Learning Goals, 'P' scales and Further Education 'Towards Independence', so that progress is tracked and achievement described and quantified. All students, including those with profound and multiple disabilities, are challenged and supported to maximise their communication, numeracy and information technology skills, using a combination of communication methods, including signing. It is evidence of the school's positive and effective target-setting that students achieve national accreditation such as BTF Trampoline Awards, ASA Swimming Awards and ASDAN Transition Challenge and Towards Independence. Students aged 16-19 progress to the Glyne Gap Faculty at Bexhill Further Education College, where they have the opportunity to participate in vocational courses and to develop life skills that will significantly enhance their independence. Glyne Gap's contribution to the progress and achievement of its students is outstanding.

Teaching and learning

All those working with students at the school understand that they personally make an important contribution to the school's outstanding teaching and learning. All are expected to develop the particular skills needed to engage with a wide range of needs and disabilities. Glyne Gap's policy of 'tough love' ensures that students are challenged as well as supported. They have the security and the discipline of clear expectations; praise and rewards are earned and therefore valued. Ensuring that challenging behaviour does not become a barrier to learning requires confident skills and commitment; both are evident throughout the school. Learning how to deal with other people and to develop as much autonomy as possible is the key to success for these students. The school presents an imaginative and expertly used variety of stimuli and incentive, the sensory room for example, to engage and empower its children and young people. Learning Support Assistants play an important and well directed part, with some taking on key responsibilities. In each of the reading, comprehension and communication lessons observed, the class teacher ensured that the learning goals were clear. Lessons began with the whole class sharing a story, followed by well differentiated activities for individual children. The children's pleasure in achievement was evident. Progress could be seen as they built on one activity when tackling the next.

Curriculum

The enthusiasm, professionalism and sense of purpose shared by all your staff and your detailed information about students' progress indicate that the impact of your curriculum on teaching and learning, on achievement and standards, and on personal development and well-being is outstanding.

The underpinning principle of Glyne Gap's curriculum innovation is the reliable and precise monitoring of individual progress. The school has innovatively extended the scope of national 'P' scales, both to match a wider spectrum of achievement and to assess students' progress along two strands of personal and social development. It has developed clear level descriptors and criteria governing movement from one level up to the next. These descriptors have then helped to shape the curriculum. Imagination and flexibility of approach ensure that students benefit from an approach that is cross-curricular and linked to national frameworks. The school has developed a successful two-tier approach for each level. Tier 1 is to provide 'relevance', with Individual Pupil Arrangements (IPA) focusing on behaviour, eating and drinking, physiotherapy and communication. Tier 2 is to provide 'breadth and balance' through, for example, topics, physical activity and enrichment activities.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. You have led Glyne Gap for many years, and have an energetic, high-visibility visionary zeal that permeates the school. Under your persuasive leadership, a very strong team of senior and middle managers has been established, with personal and professional development through specific challenge and responsibility being well targeted and productive. The leadership and management have been prepared to take carefully assessed risks to make as many 'real life' experiences as

possible accessible to the students, with confidence in the competence and commitment of staff.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a dynamic two-way process at Glyne Gap. Facilities are designed to ensure that everyone has access to the full curriculum and range of activities while still remaining safe. Every opportunity is exploited for Glyne Gap students to share experiences with their mainstream peers and to participate in the local community. In a complementary movement, mainstream students and their families come into Glyne Gap to enjoy its facilities and extend their own personal development by connecting positively with those at the school. Past students return as teachers, demonstrating not only the confidence and skills developed by the school but also the value placed upon them as individuals with a real contribution to make.

Areas for development, discussed during my visit included:

- the further dissemination of Glyne Gap's expertise and good practice beyond the school itself.

I hope these observations are useful.

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

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham
Her Majesty's Inspector