

11 February 2008

Mr K McMahon
Principal
St Mary's College
Shear Brow
Blackburn
Lancashire
BB1 8DX

Dear Mr McMahon

Ofsted survey inspection programme – 14-19 reforms

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students during my visit on Tuesday 05 February 2008 as part of our survey on 14-19 developments in the local area.

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.

The college has contributed well to planning and preparation to take forward the 14-19 reforms in the local area. St Mary's has been nominated to deliver the International Baccalaureate and is involved in diploma programmes. Very productive links have been developed with local schools. Work with gifted and talented pupils is popular and very effective, for example, the aspiring leadership day. This work with 14 to 16 year olds, whilst small in comparison to the college's main work, is well focused and successful.

The college continues to perform well, as shown by the increase in enrolments and achievement data. Particular strengths of the college are the projects linked to Aimhigher, such as the 'time travel day' and grade booster sessions. A varied enrichment programme broadens learners' education. Learners are very positive about the high quality support and advice they receive. This includes additional learning support and financial help. They are provided with very effective guidance for their future aspirations. A high proportion of learners progress onto higher education.

If there are any points or aspects of the visit you wish to discuss, please get in touch. As we will be evaluating the survey, you may be contacted in the future to find out your views. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation. Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector