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11 October 2008

Mrs Gail Young
Principal
Vale of Ancholme Technology & Music College
Westmoor House
Grammar College Road
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8BA

Dear Mrs Young

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your college on 10 October 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to thank the student council and the chair of governors for giving their time to meet with me.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection in July 2007 the college was asked to:

- Make better use of data from assessment to plan lessons, which meet the needs of all students.
- Use the outcomes of self-evaluation to diagnose what is needed to drive and secure further improvements.
- Clarify and pursue a clear vision, curriculum and strategy for sixth form provision.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the college is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising students' achievement.

The unvalidated test and examination results for 2008 indicate that, throughout the college, levels of students' achievement are improving. Rates of progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 are much improved on previous years. However, the college is aware that there is still work to be done to improve the number of students gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, and

achieving their targets in relation to specialist subjects. In order to develop their areas of specialism the college has appointed a member of the senior leadership team to oversee initiatives specifically designed to tackle any underlying weaknesses.

The new principal took up her post in the term following the last inspection. She has developed a culture of openness and accountability amongst all senior and middle leaders in the college. A clearly articulated vision for the future of the college brings a sense of urgency to all actions. Appropriate changes to senior leadership team and a redefining of their roles ensure focussed and accurate self-evaluation designed to improve outcomes for students. For example, lesson observations are now a regular feature of the work of the senior leadership team, highlighting key strengths and areas requiring improvement. This work has now identified sufficient good and outstanding teachers to act in a coaching role where teaching requires improvement. The college has received valued support in this work from the local authority. Middle managers now have a purposeful role in providing information on strengths and weaknesses in their subjects to the senior leadership team.

Roles and responsibilities within the governing body have been transformed under the astute leadership of the recently appointed chair. Consequently, the governing body is able to support the college as fully as in the past but now presents a much sharper level of challenge. Clear guidelines and training exist for all aspects of governors' work.

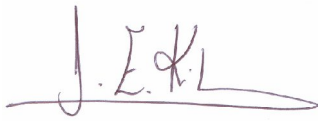
A robust system to record students' progress is now in place. Subject leaders, particularly those for the core subjects, regularly monitor rates of progress made by students. Where appropriate, support for those not making the expected gains is provided. As a result of more rigorous tracking systems, teachers' planning is now generally based on accurate information about their students' prior attainment. A common format for lesson planning is adhered to by the majority of teachers, ensuring that students are consistently aware of the learning intention. In some subjects, such as information communication technology (ICT) and mathematics, students speak knowledgeably about their targets and understand what is required for them to meet the next level. The college has sensible plans to improve further the clarity of the tracking system. Clearly defined performance management targets linked to students' progress are designed to ensure greater accountability by staff for students' achievements.

The director of sixth form leads the provision well. He now monitors and evaluates all aspects of its work, ensuring the range of courses is designed to meet fully the needs of students and the community. He has been instrumental in clarifying the vision and purpose of the sixth form. Students are well supported and guided both pastorally and academically. Self-evaluation, conducted with senior leaders from the college, is thorough and honest leading to changes where necessary. The sixth form consortium has now been strengthened to include a third college. Links with the other two sixth forms are good, with all three undertaking joint scrutiny of performance in examination results. These outcomes are accurately assessed for

strengths and weaknesses in provision. The quality of teaching and learning at the individual sixth forms is assessed but there is, as yet, no commonly agreed protocol to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the whole of the partnership. The college are seeking to formulate such a system with the consortium in order to more accurately judge the impact of teaching and learning on students' progress.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your college.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'J. E. Kilner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Kilner
Her Majesty's Inspector