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Mr S Evatt  
Headteacher  
John Hanson Community School  
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Dear Mr Evatt

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 01 October 2008 to look at work in promoting equality.

The visit provided valuable information that 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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included discussions with key members of staff, students, parents, carers, governors, key partners and the observation of parts of four lessons.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- The concept of Rights, Respect and Responsibilities (RRR) is at the heart of the work that the school does that has helped to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people. The school was formally recognised as the first Level One UNICEF rights respecting secondary school in the United Kingdom. Feeder schools in the area also use the same concept so that when children start the school they are now much better informed about the RRR process. Sharing the same framework with a local infant and junior school is improving transition, continuity and progress, with great potential for further expansion. As a consequence this reduces the anxiety those students with social and emotional needs have when they start secondary school and improves their ability to be ready to learn.

- Those who find it more difficult to behave well all the time in class are challenged by their peers in friendly ways so that all students can get on with their learning, as is their right.
- Vulnerable students are extremely well supported through the mentoring programmes. Prospective students who might be vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified in primary school in Year 6 and individual mentoring and support programmes are set up by staff in advance of their arrival. Other students not identified in this way but who feel fragile, lonely or vulnerable can opt to attend the lunch time games club as part of the peer listening system helping them to sort out problems and make new friends. It also helps staff identify students who might need extra support.
- Older students, many of whom have benefited from the specialist support provided by the school, and were at risk of exclusion of themselves at some stage, take active roles in helping other potentially disaffected students enjoy school and learn better. They act as very good role models showing how in spite of previous difficulties or misdemeanours they have succeeded academically as well as socially. This is again largely because the RRR and redemption ethos of the school sustains students to take responsibility for their own actions and to be able to redress negative attitudes.
- The personal development of vulnerable pupils is good. Their confidence grows as they move through the school because of the way in which staff nurture them. The school constantly looks for innovative ways to support them and will try new techniques or systems that have worked elsewhere with a 'John Hanson' twist.
- The staff and leadership have a 'can-do' approach. Students say that the school does not give up on them. Many examples of case studies where the school has continually tried to re-engage students with their learning or supported them through extreme personal difficulties demonstrate that this is a very caring community that goes the extra mile for the most vulnerable. External agencies who also work with these students hold the school in high esteem in the way that it tries to accommodate those with most complex individual needs, children who are looked after or who are at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Young carers are extremely well supported. They participate in assemblies to the whole school so that all students know the issues around caring for others whilst also being aware of the support that is available. They meet every Friday lunchtime when they can give each other support and build confidence for the forthcoming weekend.
- Buildings for the most part are easily accessible so that students with mobility disabilities can move easily around them. Those students who need them have keys to the lifts and remote controls that work on most doors so that they can open them for themselves. They greatly appreciate this independence.
- Students who have medical needs are very well looked after, cared for, guided and supported. They make good progress in their learning because work is set and marked by the school so that when they are not in school, during periods of hospitalisation or rehabilitation, they continue with their education as well as they can.

- Interagency work for those students who have extreme mental health issues is good.

#### Areas for development

- Work with the local authority to identify ways to be kept better informed by social services about changes in support given to students in the school.
- Working with other partners and parent/carers ensure that all students can share and celebrate their backgrounds and heritage to the same high standards as for those who are young carers or feel vulnerable.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to promote equalities in the school.

As I explained previously, 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

Steffi Penny  
Her Majesty's Inspector