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Ms R Sheikh
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Dear Ms Sheikh and Mr Chivers

Ofsted survey inspection programme – New models of school leadership: influences and outcomes

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 11 November 2008 to evaluate the impact of new models of leadership on school improvement.

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 discussions with a representative from the local authority, governors, staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation and a lesson observation.

The overall effectiveness of the co-leadership model is outstanding.

The impact of the model of leadership on achievement and standards is good.

- Students' achievement and well-being is central to the ethos of the college and improvement planning. Consequently, students make good progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 to reach above average standards at the end of Year 11. Standards are rising rapidly in Key Stages 4 and 5. Unvalidated 2008 data indicates the proportion of Year 11 students achieving five higher-grade GCSEs, and the proportion including English and mathematics amongst the five, improved very significantly.
- Comprehensive systems for tracking students' progress underpin the regular review of their individual targets for improvement. Underachievement is identified quickly and remedied by carefully tailored, effective interventions.

- Teachers and support staff know students very well and most use assessment information proficiently to evaluate students' progress and clarify what they must do next to improve.

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are robust and strongly focused on continuous improvement.
- The college is working productively to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. The expectation that the quality of teaching can always be improved is embraced by all teachers and support staff. Teachers feel very well supported in this common enterprise and have good opportunities to share effective practice.
- The college has rightly identified that there are too few opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently in lessons.

The impact of the model of leadership on the quality of the curriculum is good.

- The college reviews the curriculum regularly to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of students. Appropriate curriculum pathways have been developed to give students every opportunity to succeed.
- Students appreciate, and benefit from, the increased choice of subjects in Key Stage 4.
- The curriculum helps to develop students' commitment to life-long learning as evidenced by the high numbers that go on to further and higher education.
- A wide range of extra activities is enjoyed by students and contributes powerfully to their personal development.

The impact of the new model of leadership on the quality of leadership and management throughout the college is outstanding.

- A clear, shared vision for continuous improvement and a common set of intentions give direction and vibrancy to the work of the college.
- Leaders are successful in using challenging targets to raise standards.
- Leadership is actively developed at all levels. There are very good opportunities for staff development, clearly linked to college and individual priorities.
- Highly effective line management arrangements ensure staff feel valued, well supported and confident about their sharply defined responsibilities.
- The model of co-leadership has significantly increased the college's capacity to improve. For example, the college has been able to develop partnerships with other schools and agencies in the community that have been mutually beneficial.

The impact of the new model of leadership on inclusion is outstanding.

- Extensive consultation accompanied the implementation of the co-leadership model. Concerns were discussed openly, and consequently

support for the arrangements is very strong across all the major stakeholder groups including parents and students. This is an example of the open culture of the college that ensures high levels of participation and inclusion in decision-making.

- A feeling of belonging to the college and the excellent quality of relationships is shared by staff and students. Both are secure in feeling valued and being clear about expectations.
- Improving attendance and reducing exclusions reflect the college's strong commitment to inclusion.
- The learning support centre is effective in supporting vulnerable students. Early intervention prevents problems becoming established as barriers to learning.
- Highly effective multi-agency work underpins the very good care and support for individual students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- developing students' learning skills by extending their opportunities to work collaboratively and independently in lessons.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the leadership of your school and the federation.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline White
Her Majesty's Inspector