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Mr P Harty
Principal
St Dominic's Sixth Form College
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Dear Mr Harty

Ofsted survey: good practice in capturing the user voice

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 2 December 2008 to look at work on capturing the user voice.

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 without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: attendance at the student council meeting, observation of humanities learner focus groups, interviews with two groups of learners, a comprehensive tour of the college and examination of documentation including recent self assessment report (SAR).

Features of good practice observed

- A comprehensive range of approaches which successfully capture the learners' voice and shape the college provision and quality of teaching and learning. This includes effective representation through the student council and a student forum which provides feedback directly to tutor groups and learners in subject areas.
- A successfully fostered open culture that enables learners to influence and improve the quality of the overall learning experience at the college.
- A successful strategy to engage a wide range of staff across the college in gathering learners' views and in communicating with learners and other partners.
- A highly responsive and listening college that reacts to learner' concerns in a practical way.
- Very effective strategies to bring together the different aspects of the learner voice so that change and improvements are made.

- Innovative and continuously evolving activities to engage all learners in expressing their views. This includes learner involvement in the recruitment of new staff and participating in internal course inspection activities.
- Inclusion of impact analysis in the SAR that identifies how the college has been responsive to learners. This includes changes in practice in teaching delivery and to the structure of courses and on the way feedback on performance is given to learners.

Areas for development

- None

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the user voice in your college.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Ann Janssen
Additional Inspector