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Ms P Denham  
Vice Principal  
South Devon College  
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Dear Ms Denham

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 13 January 2009 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: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- Managers at all levels give a high priority to the views of students in maintaining and building on the college's outstanding provision.
- An open and mutually respectful environment that values student involvement and allows students to voice their opinions to all staff, including the principal, in a common understanding that students will be listened to.
- An effective range of initiatives that engage and capture the learners' voice. These include student surveys and focus groups that help the college to review, evaluate and improve provision.
- A good range of opportunities for students to become formally involved as student representatives and ambassadors, and for additional involvement in college and community activities, such as student sports development officers.
- Effective learner-led activities such as organising the annual being healthy event, managing the 'student voice' magazine and the recently established college radio, and undertaking risk assessments for visits and trips.

- A growing prominence given to the wider 'user voice' through student, employer and parent focus groups that provides feedback into the college self-assessment process and report.
- Good student representation in a wide range of college processes and activities, including staff selection panels, new building projects, the student sustainability group, the selection of new courses and the 'Teen Parent' initiative.

#### Areas for improvement

- Raise the awareness among all students of the role of student representative.

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

Bob Hamp  
Her Majesty's Inspector