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Mrs E Phillips  
Headteacher  
The St Marylebone C of E School  
64 Marylebone High Street  
London  
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Dear Mrs Phillips

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 16 January 2009 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, and the observation of parts of six lessons.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is outstanding.

Features of good practice observed

- Students who have had previously interrupted education or are likely to become disaffected or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified very early. Most frequently, this is before they start at the school. There is very robust monitoring of their academic, personal and social progress, and close collaboration with parents/carers and other support services for children and young people. As a consequence these students receive speedy and outstanding support before and after they enter the school.
- Students who are at risk of underachieving or who have a learning difficulty and/or disability make good and often outstanding progress in their learning. This is because they are taught very well. The leadership team ensures that the skills of individual members of staff are optimised through a robust programme of continuing professional development, so that in lessons and support sessions vulnerable students receive individualised support from

subject specialist teachers. This is due to the headteacher's creative utilisation of staff throughout the school, so that individual student needs are targeted very effectively.

- Excellent use of an extensive array of partnership organisations promotes the school's inclusive vision and markedly increases the achievements of vulnerable groups. One prime example of this is the use of the local refugee services and language services. Here students who are the most vulnerable receive intervention according to their individual needs. Parents and carers are involved in this, when possible, and services are provided which very effectively tackle the students' educational, language and emotional needs.
- The school sees each student as a valuable contributor to the school and celebrates their participation in the school in a way, which raises the self-esteem and confidence of all students, including those from very unsettled backgrounds. Alongside a flexible curriculum and the creative use of support groups, the school effectively engages such students in their learning by making lessons accessible, regardless of learning needs and background, often resulting in outstanding progress for the refugees in the school. A consequence is that many of them pursue further and higher education when they leave school.
- An extremely strong Christian ethos, supported by an exceptional pastoral system allows students to raise their self-esteem and confidence and engage very effectively in their learning. The Behaviour for Learning Centre is used very effectively to support students at risk of exclusion and provides courses for those with identified anger management needs and poor communication skills. The work of the school's two social workers ensures that families who are experiencing difficulties are provided with excellent support to help them resolve their issues. This also ensures that families are fully involved in decisions made around their children's support. This makes a significant difference to the life chances of the students involved as well as supporting and involving their families.
- Inclusion is outstanding. Students of all abilities and backgrounds take an active part in school activities and are fully integrated into the life and work of the school. Staff are extremely aware of the students' needs. Students spoke of the way that they can always ask teachers for help and that they never feel 'like a burden' to the staff. Students also said that there were many sources of support within the school and that if this was not enough, there is a wide network of support available externally. This range of support enables vulnerable students to concentrate on their work and to make good and outstanding progress in their time in the school.
- The care, guidance and support for vulnerable groups have an outstanding impact on improving their personal development. The overall ethos of the school promotes an outstanding tolerance and understanding of the diversity of cultures in the school. Excellent behaviour systems, founded on mediation, assertiveness and the importance of positive relationships enables students to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Because students can start again

with a clean slate if they have slipped off the rails and have a clear understanding of acceptable boundaries, they are in a position to progress well with their learning. Students greatly appreciated this. In the sixth form, the recently appointed Director of Post-16 Education has implemented more rigour and structure. These new systems have been well received by students as they have provided them with a clearer framework in which to learn. Since their introduction, the 'drop out' rate has reduced significantly, particularly amongst the boys who are in a significant minority in the sixth form. Peer mentoring and coaching enables older students to support younger ones who are going through similar difficulties to the ones that they have overcome themselves. An exemplary and outstanding innovation in the school is the use of peer interpreters. This scheme uses the multi-lingual skills of students and provides them with training to be able to develop their skills as interpreters in order to support other students in the school. This again shows how the school values the presence of a diversity of languages and cultures in the school and is keen to build on that diversity to create an ethos of success for all.

- Interagency work for those students who have extreme mental health issues is outstanding due to the range of external support services available and the way that the school's co-ordinates its work with them. These include CAMHS, Connexions, health services, specialised clinics, victim support, family centres, refugee groups, educational psychologist.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The ethos of the school has been painstakingly built around respect and high expectations, for all. This has been disseminated to all members of the school community and, as a result, progress is good and often outstanding for the vulnerable students in the school.

#### Areas for development

- To monitor groups of students in all aspects of data collection so that any trends over time can be identified and interventions put in place to address the needs of those groups.

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

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.

Ofsted gathers information on the immediate and longer-term impact of survey inspections, both on the institutions themselves, and with a view to improving its own processes. To this end, I should be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire and return it within the next ten days. We have also just sent a copy of the questionnaire by email. Please return your completed questionnaire to either the email or postal address on the form, not to me. We may also contact some schools by telephone after several months in order for us

to gain a picture of longer-term impact. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

David Muir  
Her Majesty's Inspector