

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

Textphone 0161 618 8524  
T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0207 421 5642  
Direct F 0207 421 6746  
Mark.Hogan@ofsted.gov.uk



15<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Mr. G. Phillips  
Principal  
The Meadows Sports College  
Dudley Road East  
Oldbury  
B69 3BU

Dear Mr. Phillips,

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Moving through the system

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 3 December 2008 to look at work on developing the future economic well-being of students in your college. We also looked at how well arrangements are made to prepare students for leaving college.

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:

- Meetings with yourself and staff
- Meeting with your Connexions personal adviser
- Visit to the Therapeutic Provision Centre
- Observation of part of two lessons
- Tour of the evening clubs
- A meeting with the School Council
- Review of a significant amount of written information that you provided both before and during my visit.

Overall, your work in developing the future economic well-being of students in your college is outstanding. Taking into account the cognition and learning difficulties plus the additional complex needs, students demonstrate a strongly developing self-confidence that empowers them to take the initiative and also to work constructively with others. They learn very well how to deal with change and to be creative in their thinking. They are bold enough to take well-judged risks and most are rational in their decision-making. The students in the Further Education Centre have a very good understanding of their career and progression options. Through their opportunities for meeting visitors, attending college courses and other contact with outside agencies, they develop a good understanding of the disciplines required in their post-college options. The college mission statement aptly describes the development of



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

economic well-being within the college. 'Creating a happy, inclusive learning environment enriched with sporting and art activities to raise student achievement.'

Features of effective practice:

- All students make very good progress towards the challenging and measurable targets on their individual education plans. They achieve well and gain in independence. The well-structured and individualised curriculum creates many opportunities for practising and improving personal and social skills resulting in outstanding personal development. The Learning Environment Match of Needs (LEMON) personalised learning sheet effectively facilitates personal learning opportunities and aids raising achievement. The behaviour support programme is effective and the annual reviews clearly show individual progress and areas for ongoing development. In July 2008, 53% of leavers from the Further Education Centre progressed into a college course and 47% into specialist provision run by social services. In July 2009, the planned progressions are 67% into college courses and 33% into specialist provision. The success rate in the Further Education Centre is 100%, with every student gaining at least one award.
- The curriculum for economic well-being is comprehensive, well planned and cross-referenced to personal development. It is centred on personalised learning with all students having core elements and additional enrichment and enhancement activities. There are detailed policies for each curriculum area and lateral progression is viewed as important for students where appropriate. The policy for careers education and guidance is very comprehensive and confirms the commitment to integration across the curriculum. Careers and work-related learning is assessed as part of the college's assessment cycle. Appropriate external accreditation is well structured with a progression in levels through the college.
- The move into the Further Education Centre in year 11 is seen as a progression into a new environment. The curriculum includes the core subjects and options. The wide range of options encourages students to expand their learning, interests and experience. Options include; looking at how the world works, the world around us, mini-enterprise, sports studies, catering, performing arts and creative arts. Students attend local colleges in years 13 and 14 as appropriate. The links with the local Education Business Partnership provides mentoring courses to prepare students to become mentors for the younger pupils. This further develops their personal and social skills. The links with the sports partnership schools provide opportunities for work experience and additional work experience is available within the college.
- All students benefit from the excellent relationship with the Connexions personal adviser. This very effectively supports them at key transition and transfer points. Where possible, the personal adviser attends every annual review and liaises with any additional specialist Connexions personal advisers and social services. The college makes good use of the specialist materials prepared by Connexions and the Sandwell Transition Team. The transition plan, developed after the year 9 transitional review, is well laid out, contains relevant, brightly coloured graphics and asks challenging and thought provoking questions. Pupils complete the document with support.

- Leadership and management are outstanding with innovative and creative ideas. The structuring and deployment of the staffing team is very effective with strategic responsibilities across four key areas; leadership, excellence, experience and support. Staff are enthusiastic and fully committed to ensure each student achieves at the highest level possible. The designation of the school as a specialist sports college with art as a second subject has not only enhanced the opportunities for the students but also encourages external use of the facilities. Well thought out development plans encourage the opportunities for integration of mainstream school pupils and community groups with the colleges' students. The development of evening clubs is very successful with 29% of the college role participating.
- Partnerships with schools and external agencies are excellent and offer opportunities for students to use other facilities and extend their experiences. The specialist sports designation has widely extended the partnerships with other organisations.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Gathering data on the progression of students after they leave college to identify successful progression routes and provide role model examples for students.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop economic well-being in the college.

As I explained, 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

**Jan LLoyd**

Jan LLoyd  
Her Majesty's Inspector

