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Ms Tess Blight  
Headteacher  
Sanders Draper Secondary School and Specialist Science College  
Suttons Lane  
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RM21 6RT

Dear Ms Blight

#### 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 21 and 22 January 2009 to look at work on developing the future economic well-being of students in your 11-16 school and careers education. I also looked at how well arrangements are made to support students during their transition into secondary school and post-16 education. The school has specialist science college status and also supports a small partial hearing unit for students with hearing loss.

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 and discussions with senior leaders and representative school governors
- meeting teachers, your SENCO, a senior learning mentor and other staff
- a meeting with your Connexions adviser and information, advice and guidance (IAG) pastoral school staff
- discussions with groups of students across Years 7,9,10 and 11. A total of 24 students participated in these interviews some of which were held as a 'business lunch'
- observations of parts of 11 lessons reflecting the curriculum and both key stages.

Your work in developing the future economic well-being of pupils in your school is outstanding. There is outstanding leadership and management across the school, including the contribution made by school governors. The partnership with Connexions has led to a coherent programme of mentoring, identification and intervention for vulnerable students, college links and vocational courses with work placements. This programme, which is inclusive of the full range of ability, has been outstandingly effective. The guidance and support given in transition choices for students in Years 9, 10 and 11 are excellent. The school is fully inclusive, provides outstanding, appropriate curriculum provision and keeps parents very well informed.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

#### Features of effective practice:

- Students develop good economic and business understanding and financial capability. They demonstrate they are able to learn independently. Achievement in simple financial decision-making is good for most learners. This includes value for money, problem solving and working together in groups.
- Key skills in the core subjects (English, mathematics, science, and information technology) are broadly in line with national standards. Almost all Year 11 students work towards the GCSE in statistics. This increases students' additional skills in handling and interpreting data.
- The school's senior and middle management are fully and effectively engaged in the planning of careers education and IAG. The service-led agreement with Connexions is comprehensive and regularly monitored and evaluated by the school and governors. The school fully understands the new Young Persons Quality Standards and all operational criteria are met.
- There are now very good opportunities for all learners across the ability range to develop career and financial capability through the enhanced curriculum provision. This provision is continuing to develop along with outside partnerships with other schools, colleges, training providers and centres of manufacturing excellence. The school is fully involved in developing a range of initiatives including the Young Apprenticeship programme, the local Engagement programme and the pilot of the Foundation Learning Tier. It is also introducing two diplomas in 2010.
- Transition from primary school is well planned and uses a Move On Up transition booklet for pupils in year 6 as well as taster days in the school. Students entering the school develop a good level of self-confidence and strong team-working skills and value its positive culture. The Bridges Unit offers specific support for a small number of vulnerable students. This self-contained unit within the main campus offers intensive social and emotional support to develop confidence in the real world to students who have identified additional needs that require a diverse approach to accessing the academic curriculum. The students join their peers in the main school for such activities as form-time, physical education and personal, social, health and economic well-being (PSHE).
- Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Small groups of students receive learning opportunities focused on their identified needs. The broader curriculum successfully engages students while in school. Links with partners provide external opportunities for learning and work-related experiences. The early identification of potential not in education, employment or training (NEET) students is leading to a downward trend.
- There is very good co-ordination and management of the wider curriculum provision. Case studies of students and analysis of data provide performance insights about specific

groups so that the curriculum offer, staffing and resources are tailored to the identified needs.

- All students achieve very well across a diverse range of qualifications. This enables students to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding of the business world when they leave school.
- Older students make good progress in their business, computer and financial literacy, and in their understanding of their career options. Through work experience and other contact with employers, the local colleges and other work-based training providers, older students develop a good appreciation of the skills and attributes necessary for success.
- Recent participation by all Year 9 students in Aim Higher visits to university and higher education institutions is potentially creating new horizons. The school also links with the specific initiative for special educational needs students where university students act as ambassadors to promote further and higher education to this group. The creation of an international school partnership, that has included an exchange visit to Cuba and a planned exchange with a deaf school in the USA, is also extending students' horizons.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- Now that testing is being phased out for Key Stage 3, review the available time to provide opportunities to develop better self-knowledge, direct experiences and capabilities for students that promote a 'can-do' attitude.

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

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,

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional inspector