

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Ms M Thompson
Principal
Bridge College
Curzon Road
Offerton
Stockport
SK2 5DG

Dear Ms Thompson

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in Post 16 Citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 12 May 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

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 students, managers and tutors, classroom observations and scrutiny of documentation.

Features of good practice observed

- At Bridge College citizenship describes a broad range of activities and actions to support the learner. Citizenship features highly across the college through tutorials, PSHE, work related learning and preparation for transition.
- The weekly 'citizenship day' introduces flexibility into the curriculum. For example it enables students to participate in community based activities.
- 'Transition' is a major feature of the citizenship curriculum; it includes learning for independence and reinforces well students' entitlement to access community provision such as leisure, employment, training, social care and health services.
- Students gain an understanding about themselves and their relationships with others. Many learn to fulfil roles in college life such as running the café or assisting with college administrative support.

- 'Cre8iv Design', a company formed as part of the north west Young Enterprise Scheme, helps students understand about enterprise and take on work roles.
- The student council is enabled to take real and significant decisions.
- Students have opportunities for participating and taking responsible action, for example working with a housing charity; students experienced 'sleeping' on a bench, and built shelters which reinforced the necessity for all to have a 'roof over their head'. Regular charity fundraising is linked to the exploration of issues underlying the appeal.
- The Bridge citizenship programme has a strong advocacy function within the local community by supporting students in Young Enterprise to use the bank, clothes shops and supermarkets and access public transport; such activities resonate with citizenship curriculum of political and social awareness, inclusion and equality. Through such activities, the college is successful in educating the community about students' needs and aspirations.
- Samples of annual student reports demonstrate links between citizenship activity and student achievement more broadly, for example that students practise 'active citizenship', 'respect differences' and demonstrate an awareness of the concept of 'self'.
- Managers adopt an open minded and critical approach to the curriculum. Teaching, learning and support are carefully tailored to the needs of individuals.

Areas for development

Citizenship is used as a generic description; the concept is not therefore defined within the curriculum nor agreed among staff. We discussed the benefits of establishing common principles in relation to citizenship provision to underpin the good practice identified above.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship in the college.

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

Yours sincerely

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector