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Ms S Dicketts  
Principal  
Oxford and Cherwell Valley College  
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Dear Ms Dicketts

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in Post 16 Citizenship  
Education

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during  
my visit on 25 June 2009 to look at work in citizenship education.

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

- There is a high level of expertise and understanding about citizenship education among key managers. Managers generally have a shared view of what citizenship is seeking to contribute in terms of students' 'rounded education'. They have successfully kept abreast with national developments in curriculum, accreditation and in teaching and learning.
- Evidence provided to inspectors for the visit was well chosen and demonstrated the breadth of citizenship education across the college.
- Students from across the full ability range were able to describe the nature of citizenship education provided by the college. They discussed topical and political issues in a lively manner, and were accustomed to discussion and debate.

- Delivery is through the tutorial programme, subject teaching, enrichment and student support services. Foundation Studies in particular provides a good model whereby citizenship aims to meet students' wider social needs.
- Foundation level programmes provide good evidence of progression in citizenship. They place an emphasis on students applying what they have learnt in new settings and on their active participation in community matters.
- The Foundation Stage Learner Engagement Strategy sets out a clear student entitlement to taught citizenship modules, democratically elected course representation and participation in citizenship projects.
- Mainstream courses such as the Diploma in Public Services and health and social care develop student awareness of citizenship well. The college has created National Open College Network citizenship units which set out explicit learning outcomes and assessment criteria. These units give citizenship education increased relevance and currency across the college.
- The active participation of young people in citizenship related activities is well considered. Student union activity supports learning well and fundraising and charitable activities, usually student generated, are designed to encourage students to engage with issues underpinning such events.
- Events such as the 'Make a difference' awards have raised the profile of student participation and learner engagement.
- Mapping citizenship education activity across broader subject areas has had limited value. Plans to update this task are timely.
- Ongoing developmental work with external post 16 citizenship agencies has been hugely beneficial to the college. This link has enabled the agency and the college to learn together and encouraged the college to approach citizenship education with confidence.

#### Areas for development

- Consider the benefits of a more clearly defined citizenship curriculum.
- Build on the body of knowledge evident to strengthen the tutorial programme.
- Collate and disseminate beyond the college the good practice found in Foundation Studies.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship education 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