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Mrs L Allen
Headteacher
Whitley Abbey Business and Enterprise College
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Dear Mrs Allen

Ofsted survey: good practice in the development of leadership skills and effectiveness

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 April 2009 to look at the work that you are doing to develop and sustain high quality leadership in your school.

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: a review of documentation and assessment information; lessons observation; and discussions with staff, students and the Chair of Governors.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's work to develop the skills and effectiveness of leaders is outstanding. Achievement is outstanding because the curriculum meets the needs of students they receive all the support they need to be successful.
- The headteacher's high expectations permeate every part of the school.
- High levels of accountability are maintained through effective monitoring and evaluation.
- The introduction of cross-curricular approaches in Years 7 and 8 has been a stimulus for staff development. Staff are adept at taking up approaches from one subject to be used in another.

- Staff are united in their view that they have developed as leaders largely because of the opportunities they have had to undertake school improvement work.
- Staff value the opportunities they have to participate in various leadership programmes, for instance Leading from the Middle and the National Qualification for Headship. These have increased the confidence of staff as they have been able to reflect on their practice more deeply.

Areas for development

- Focus leaders' monitoring and evaluation activity on the learning and progress made by different groups of students

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your work in this area.

As I explained previously, 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.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector