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Mr P Beaven
Headteacher
Norton Hill School
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Dear Mr Beaven

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 30 April 2009 to look at the work that you are doing to develop and sustain high quality leadership in your school and your partner 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: discussions with staff, students, a governor and a local authority officer; scrutiny of documentation; a number of lesson observations. In addition, evidence was also used from my visit on 1 May 2009 to one of your partner schools.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's work to develop the skills and effectiveness of leaders is outstanding. You set a strong and clear direction for this work.
- The school's performance management process is rigorous. It enables senior staff to identify precisely, leadership development needs.
- Systems and processes are securely in place to ensure that senior leaders are able to identify leadership skills and talent at an early stage in a teacher's career. The school's 'Leading Teacher' scheme provides strong, well structured support to enable aspiring leaders to develop leadership skills quickly and effectively.

- Middle leaders are provided with very effective mentoring and support. This helps new middle leaders to prioritise actions and balance the demands of the job very well.
- Work done to promote the leadership skills and effectiveness of support staff is outstanding.
- Students are provided with an impressive range of opportunities to develop their own leadership skills.
- The school provides a wide range of very helpful support to its partner school.

Areas for development

- Exploit the opportunities provided by the school's recent federation arrangements to share good practice in the development of leadership and management.

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

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector