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Mr D Meredith  
Headteacher  
Perryfields High School Specialist  
Maths and Computing College  
Oldacre Road  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mr Meredith

Ofsted aspect survey – Raising aspirations and achievement: the power of partnership

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on Thursday 25 June 2009 to look at your partnership with higher 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: discussions with senior leaders and middle managers, trainee and newly qualified teachers, the Aimhigher coordinator and a representative from higher education. I also visited four lessons, spoke to students and looked at documents including school data and student evaluations.

Features of good practice observed

- The school is highly committed to working in partnership with a range of higher education providers, colleges of further education and local employers. It works fully and actively with partners to improve outcomes for students in aspects of education which the school alone could not provide. Good examples are collaboration with Birmingham University to plan 14-19 provision for the diploma in information technology, and with Wolverhampton University to provide support for students and teachers completing the application process for higher education.
- Effective partnerships with higher education providers of initial teacher training have contributed to the quality of teaching and learning by:

- improving the subject knowledge and pedagogy of teachers, particularly in the English, mathematics and PE departments
- improving the leadership capacity and professional development of middle managers and teachers within these departments
- providing high quality training for teachers from the local community and/or families with no prior experience of further or higher education.
- Partnerships with colleges, universities and employers have been used very well by the school to increase the proportion of students continuing in education, employment and training.
- The school works successfully with Aimhigher to provide challenging opportunities for targeted students who are underachieving despite having the potential to move into higher education. In discussion, students reported considerable improvements to their confidence and self-esteem.
- Local trainee teachers are excellent ambassadors for raising the aspirations of students.

#### Areas for development

- Further evaluate the impact of partnership on improving outcomes for all students and teachers.
- Develop ways to assure the quality of learning that takes place through partnership working and targeted initiatives to widen participation in higher and further education.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop partnerships in support of school improvement.

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

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector