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03 November 2009

Mrs J Steele
Headteacher
Newent Community College
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Dear Mrs Steele

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme – Girls' and young women's achievement

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during our visit on 6 October 2009, to look at the causes of girls' and young women's underachievement and long-term economic well-being and the good practice that effectively supports them.

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 we used to inform the judgements made included: discussions with senior leaders and staff; observation of part of four lessons; discussions with three groups of girls and young women; feedback from local employers; and school documentation.

Overall, your work on promoting the achievement of girls and young women, and in developing their future economic well-being, is good. The creative and innovative curriculum provides good opportunities for all students to develop their financial awareness and to explore the implications of career choices on salary levels. This provides valuable insights to young people on the cost of living, budgeting to meet household bills and the consequential impact on lifestyle choices. However, some of this work is new and not fully embedded across the school. The impact is felt most strongly in the sixth form.

Features of effective practice

- Innovative approach to developing awareness of financial capability through the 'Real Money' exercise. This is designed effectively by staff to

challenge learners to think about lifestyle choices and budget management linked to different occupations.

- High quality, coordinated and accessible systems of care and support, which are very much appreciated and valued by girls and young women.
- Strong partnership arrangements with Connexions, Education Business Partnership and local colleges to provide personalised support and extended curriculum opportunities. This is complemented by a strong commitment to careers education and guidance, and the enthusiasm of the Personal Development and Future Choices team to seek out and share good practice.

Area for improvement, which we discussed include:

- using the work experience programme to extend the experiences of girls and young women into areas of work traditionally undertaken by men to challenge gender stereotypes, and to support a wider choice of career options
- expanding the use of role models to challenge gender stereotypes linked to course and vocational choices, and maximise the use of visitors to the school to broaden awareness of different areas of work
- evaluating the impact of careers education and guidance, personal, social and health education, and work-related learning on girls' and young women's knowledge, understanding and awareness of course choices and progression routes, and implications for their future economic well-being.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to promote achievement and develop the economic well-being of girls and young women in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic and Jan Lloyd
Her Majesty's Inspectors