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Mrs P McQuade
Headteacher
Greenbank High School
Hastings Road
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Dear Mrs McQuade

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 my visit on 15 December 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 used to inform the judgements included: discussions with senior leaders and staff; observation of parts of two lessons; discussions with two groups of girls and young women; feedback from local employers; and a review of school documentation.

Overall, your work on promoting the achievement of girls' and young women, and in developing their future economic well-being is outstanding. Girls have an excellent understanding of the different and changing roles of women in society within the United Kingdom and across the world. They clearly recognise the implications of the choices they make for their future economic well-being. Their awareness of their rights and responsibilities in different relationships is very strong. The girls are motivated to achieve highly and they see no bounds arising from gender stereotypes. The school provides good insights into non-traditional career paths, but there is scope to extend this further by encouraging girls to make more adventurous choices of placement for work-experience.

Features of effective practice

- Cross-curricular work, linked to the school's specialist status as a language college and its international links and work, provides girls with excellent

opportunities and an outstanding awareness of different cultures, both within the school and across the world.

- The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is highly effective, especially the sex and relationship education. It is planned coherently and systematically to extend and deepen girls' knowledge as they move through the school. Girls say that it meets their needs and promotes their health and well-being very effectively.
- There is a very strong programme to develop enterprise skills. This includes financial awareness and skills in leadership, team work and communication.
- Varied events, visitors, visits and role-models ensure that girls have a good awareness of courses and careers which challenge stereotypes.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using the work-experience programme to extend girls' experience of work in non-traditional areas
- increasing the opportunities in lessons for girls to assess the levels and grades they are working at themselves, and to increase their independence in learning and to further accelerate their progress.

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 previously, 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

Liz Godman
Additional inspector