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18 December 2009

Mrs J Lawrie  
Headteacher  
The Trafalgar School at Downton  
Breamore Road  
Downton  
Salisbury  
SP5 3HN

Dear Mrs Lawrie

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 8 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 made included: discussions with yourself and staff; observation of part of two lessons; discussions with two groups of girls and young women; 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. The school has an excellent understanding of the particular needs of girls and young women and uses role models effectively to raise aspirations. The wide-ranging curriculum includes opportunities for all students to develop their financial awareness and prepare for further education, training and the world of work when they leave the school. The continued improvement in the progress and achievement of students, especially in mathematics and English, is good.

Features of effective practice

- Very comprehensive and effective provision supports students' transition from their primary school, and also for students joining after Year 7. The

school understands individual needs and abilities well and students settle into the school quickly.

- The school uses a 'Tick-Star-Cross' system to effectively monitor students' progress, and to identify additional support required. Parents receive four-weekly reports for Years 10 and 11 and termly reports for other years.
- Every student has a personalised learning and support programme with challenging targets.
- The school uses its close and supportive links with parents effectively to raise girls' and young women's aspirations. This encourages them to achieve their full potential after leaving the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- considering the introduction of information on a wider range of career and employment opportunities before Year 9 to enable girls and young women to be better informed when making their option choices
- encouraging the wide range of visitors to the school to talk about their work role, and how they achieved it.

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

Jan LLOYD  
Her Majesty's Inspector