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Ms M Sutton
Principal
Bradford College
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Dear Ms Sutton

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, during my visit on 8 October 2009, to examine the causes of girls' and young women's underachievement and long-term economic well-being and the good practice that effectively supports them. Please also pass on my thanks to Kath and to all the other staff and students who assisted with the provision of evidence for the survey.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national survey report. 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; observation of part of two lessons; discussions with two groups of young women; feedback from local employers; and relevant documentation provided by the college.

Overall, your work on promoting the achievement of young women, and in developing their future economic well-being is good with some outstanding features.

Young women make good progress in developing personal, social and employability skills and demonstrate a good awareness of career opportunities. They are supported very well by a broad and flexible curriculum which promotes economic well-being. The college has been successful in challenging stereotypes and promotes women's achievement very effectively.

Features of effective practice

- Young women meet challenging targets and make good progress in relation to their starting points. Some make very good progress.
- Good development of knowledge, skills and understanding with good opportunities for those with multiple problems to make progress and achieve.
- Young women are well motivated and enjoy their courses. They feel safe and make good progress in developing good personal, social and employability skills. They develop good understanding of expectations in the workplace through work experience, placements, and employers' visits to the college.
- An outstanding curriculum offer which effectively engages disaffected and underachieving young women through its breadth and flexibility, providing a wide range of levels, flexible locations and starting points throughout the year, women-only courses in non-traditional areas, vocational carousel and summer school tasters.
- Very effective and well-integrated support and enrichment to increase awareness of progression and employment opportunities.
- Strong leadership focusing on responsiveness to learners and the local community, and good partnership working with a wide range of external agencies and employers.
- Good monitoring of attendance and personal and academic development through well developed personal tutor and group tutorial arrangements.
- Good focus on staffing to address gender imbalances and challenge gender stereotypes.
- Strong and effective commitment to social inclusion, community cohesion and meeting the needs of the local community.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further development of partnerships with local schools to address the declining proportion of girls and young women following college vocational courses
- a better focus on activities and strategies in lesson plans and schemes of work to challenge traditional gender stereotypes.

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

As I explained, a copy of this letter will be sent to the local Learning and Skills Council. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Truscott
Her Majesty's Inspector