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Mrs G Parsons  
Principal  
Lowestoft College  
St Peter's Street  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 2NB

Dear Mrs Parsons

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, during my visit on 20 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.

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; 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. The curriculum provides young women with a good range of career and progression opportunities but, in the main, the choices they make are stereotypical. Within this context the college successfully develops young women's employability skills, with a clear focus on their economic well-being.

Features of effective practice observed, include:

- good development of young women's employability skills
- well-planned and professionally delivered teaching sessions, with a clear focus on skills for employment and economic well-being

- a vocational curriculum offer that is effective in providing young women with career and progression opportunities and includes provision targeted at those who are 'hard to reach'
- strong collaborative partnerships with schools to meet the needs of the local community
- successful recruitment of young women on to uniformed services courses
- effective support for vulnerable young women, those with a disability and those who are pregnant.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- the recruitment of more young women on to construction and engineering programmes, building on the college's success with uniformed services
- greater use of female role-models from the local community, and former female students, to inspire young women
- a review of marketing materials to ensure that they do not reinforce stereotypes
- development of the college's good liaison work with schools to increase girls' and young women's awareness of all vocational courses.

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

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

Yours sincerely

Harriet Harper  
Her Majesty's Inspector