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Mr P Topping
Headteacher
The Hadley Learning Community
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Dear Mr Topping

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 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 included: discussions with senior leaders, staff and the school's Connexions Adviser; observation of part of two lessons; discussions with three 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 good. The school has a strong understanding of the diverse needs of students and the barriers and challenges faced within the community. This knowledge is used effectively to personalise and enrich the curriculum to provide a wide range of innovative activities to broaden horizons and raise aspirations.

Features of effective practice

- Thorough and regular assessment monitoring through the Raising Bars system is used effectively to identify discrete target groups for intervention in Year 11. This enables intervention programmes to be tailored to meet individual needs across the ability range to raise expectations and standards.

- Flexible curriculum pathways provide vocational routes and placements for vulnerable young women. Close monitoring and high-quality support enable these young women to experience success, and develop work-based skills to prepare them for the future.
- The engineering specialism provides opportunities for work-placements, business links and careers guidance. Students gain insights about the importance of engineering to the local and national economy.
- A comprehensive programme of careers and enterprise education, work-related learning, and activities to promote financial capability across Years 7 to 11 equip girls and young women with a good awareness of expectations in the workplace, and future options.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- continuing to promote improvement in literacy and numeracy skills to expand options available at 16 years, and to support the long-term economic well-being of young women
- considering approaches to challenge stereotypical course and work-experience choices for young women.

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 Trikić
Her Majesty's Inspector