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Mrs L Magrath
Headteacher
Cheadle Hulme High School
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Dear Mrs Magrath

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 10 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 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 good. The different and often highly personalised curriculum pathways at Key Stage 4 provide good opportunities for girls to succeed and to gain a wide range of accreditation matched to their needs, interests and abilities. This has allowed some girls to follow non-traditional routes, including engineering, sport and science. They have tackled this with fearless determination. Girls have some awareness of the implications of their choices for their future economic well-being, but this is not consistent. Some Key Stage 3 girls, in particular, show limited knowledge in this area.

Features of effective practice

- Effective systems for monitoring students' progress ensure early identification of girls at risk of underachieving. Successful intervention raises many girls' aspirations and enables them to get back on track.
- Arrangements for the support and care of girls at risk of becoming vulnerable are coordinated very well and are of high quality. Girls are extremely positive about this support.
- Older girls, in particular, enjoy school and are developing excellent personal qualities and skills for future study and work.
- The school has given thoughtful attention to work-related learning across the curriculum. Development plans refer to opportunities for this in each subject. In addition, most course entries in the Year 9 options booklet refer to what may be possible in the future.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing the consistency of the sex and relationship education programme, in particular the relationships dimension, and ensuring that advice, support and guidance, based on the evaluation of girls' needs and views, are accessible to those who may not readily seek it
- maximising the use of visitors to school to challenge gender stereotypes and to widen girls' awareness of different areas of work, especially at Key Stage 3.

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

Liz Godman
Additional inspector