

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



04 November 2009

Dr A Williams
Headteacher
Holmfirth High School
Heys Road
Thongsbridge
Holmfirth
HD9 7SE

Dear Mr Williams

Ofsted survey inspection programme – good practice in the development of leadership skills and effectiveness

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 7 October 2009 to look at the work that you are doing to develop and sustain high-quality leadership in your school and your partner school.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included scrutiny of documentation, a learning walk and discussions with staff and students. In addition, evidence was also used from discussions with staff in your partner school and a representative of the local authority.

Features of good practice observed

- The school's work to develop the skills and impact of leaders is effective.
- The schools approach to leadership improvement is promoting the well-being of all members of the community.
- Leaders are encouraged to take responsibility and be creative.
- The leadership has successfully engendered a strong desire for improvement in the context of a school with many long-serving members of staff.
- The school has tenaciously set about the task of making teaching and learning outstanding by systematically tackling the issues raised at the school's previous inspection.
- Evaluation is very thorough and involves all staff. There is a wide understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses.

- The school goes to great lengths to ensure the best use of resources and to reduce the risks associated with innovation, including partnership work with other schools.
- The school identifies and promotes talent very effectively at all levels through the flexible use of fixed-term projects and the involvement of staff in high-quality professional development.
- Staff willingly take on additional responsibilities because they know they will receive good support that increases the likelihood of success.
- The need for staff to be credible in their role when supporting other schools has motivated them to reflect on existing practices in their own school.
- Students make a strong contribution to the well-being of the whole community through their active involvement in the school council and in a wide range of leadership roles.
- Despite your school's success, there is recognition that a lot can be learnt from working in partnership with other schools.
- Your partner school values the developing relationship because it has helped to close gaps in provision and has been influential in its further development.
- Sensitive management of the overall partnership has ensured that staff feel they are equal partners and are supportive of developing an even closer relationship in the future.
- Your governors value the partnership work. They have recognised that this is an integral part of how the school can continue to improve and build its reputation in the community.

Areas for development

- Ensure planning gives greater emphasis to student progress.
- Further increase the opportunities students have to influence learning across the whole school.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your work in this area.

As I explained previously, 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

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector