

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr D Sands  
Principal  
Norbury Manor Business and Enterprise College for Girls  
Kensington Avenue  
Thornton Heath  
CR7 8BT

Dear Mr Sands

Ofsted aspect survey – Raising aspirations and achievement: the power of partnership

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 13 October 2009 to look at your partnerships with business.

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 scrutiny of documentation; observations; and discussions with you, other staff, students and business and community partners.

Features of good practice observed

- A clear, shared vision of how business partnerships and enterprise can improve life opportunities for students drives and embeds ambition at all levels of leadership.
- Specialism in business and enterprise and partnerships with business permeate the ethos of the college and are integral to students' learning experiences across the curriculum. The skills, understanding and personal qualities that students consequently develop support their achievement in all subjects. There is clear evidence that your focus on enterprise skills is helping students to improve their examination grades.
- Business partnerships and enterprise education make a highly beneficial contribution to students' personal development and enjoyment of school. There are excellent opportunities for students to develop communication,

team building and leadership skills. As a result, most grow into confident individuals with high aspirations.

- Excellent opportunities for work-related learning for younger and older students are complemented by high quality careers education. Business partners make a very valuable contribution through offering work-placements, mentoring individual students and talking to groups about their first hand experiences of work. Students greatly appreciate the chance to go through mock selection processes for jobs, including completing application forms, being interviewed and receiving feedback about their performance.
- Specialism and business partnerships are influential in extending teaching methods and expertise. Enterprise activities feature in lesson planning and assessment across subjects. Students have wide-ranging opportunities to lead learning and evaluate their own and each other's progress. They enjoy the high level of participation and involvement expected of them in many lessons. Information and communication technology has been developed as a key tool for learning and is an important factor in engaging students and raising the standard of their work.
- Business partnerships and specialism give breadth and richness to the curriculum. Regular cross-curricular theme days are integral to provision. This approach builds links between subjects and ensures students apply and consolidate learning in different contexts.
- Where the college has identified variation in the achievement of different groups of students, business and enterprise projects have been used successfully to narrow the gaps.
- Very good professional development opportunities link to the college's improvement plan and involve all staff in developing business partnerships and enterprise skills. For example, a training event challenged all staff to make and meet a contact in the world of work and then take their learning back to curriculum teams to promote innovation and develop expertise.
- The creation of non-teaching support roles to sustain business partnerships has been fundamental to the positive impact of the partnerships and the college's specialism. They also increase the college's capacity to lead the development of business and enterprise education in other schools.
- Business partners see their links with the college as mutually beneficial. They value the quality of the relationships that have been established and the creativity that students offer.
- The college is outward-looking and has established an impressive portfolio of partnerships to promote students' learning and well-being. Excellent outreach work with local primary schools and family learning sessions are improving cohesion and access to learning in the wider community. The college wants to develop these aspects of its work further.

## Areas for development

- Continue to build links with the wider community, particularly through the development of the new business centre and partnership with local special schools.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop partnerships in support of school improvement.

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

Jacqueline White  
Her Majesty's Inspector