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Ms J Howkins
Headteacher
Bentley Wood High School
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Dear Ms Howkins

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: 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 9 and 10 November 2009 to look at your partnership with schools.

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: discussions with senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors, six groups of students, two local headteachers, a college principal and a manager of a private nursery. I observed five lessons with you and looked at key documentation, including photographic evidence and video recordings of partnership work.

Features of good practice observed

- Your school has been at the forefront of proactive and innovative partnership work for many years. Partnerships are central to the school's vision and ethos to improve outcomes for students in aspects of education which it alone could not provide. All leaders and governors are highly committed to working with a wide range of partners, including higher education providers, colleges of further education, local schools and the private sector. As a result, the school has established an impressive range of partnerships.
- The Harrow Collegiate is offering flexible post-16 provision for students. This is a result of strong collaboration over the years between high schools, special schools and colleges. Students from several institutions spoke enthusiastically about how the collegiate is enabling them to access a diverse range of courses. They also appreciate the chance to socialise and learn alongside new peers. All sixth-form teaching observed was good or better and students' displayed high levels of motivation. Rigorous

monitoring systems and procedures are in place to ensure consistency of provision across the partnership.

- Partnerships arising from the school's specialist status in mathematics are making a significant contribution to improving the achievement and well-being of both your own and local students. Students report that the mathematics masterclasses you host for schools in the region challenge them to tackle problems that cannot be covered in the classroom. The impressive teaching I observed by a group of Year 9 students, who attend these sessions, was a fitting testament to the positive impact of your specialist status on raising standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Your specialist status in information and communication technology (ICT) is also having a notable impact on students' achievement, due to good outreach work with middle schools. We agreed that your plan to include more schools in the programme is appropriate. The opportunities for sixth-form students to teach ICT to members of the community, as part of the University of the Third Age partnership, is an excellent example of how the school places a high importance on promoting community cohesion.
- The successful partnerships you have established, with middle schools and private nurseries, in modern foreign languages and health and social care are having a beneficial impact on the students' personal development. Both initiatives are excellent examples of the school's commitment to ensure all groups of students succeed. In discussion, students reported considerable improvements to their motivation, confidence and self-esteem; and course outcomes indicate good attendance, retention and completion.
- Students were unanimous in their praise for the high-quality music enrichment programme on offer, including the partnership with Harrow Young Musicians. The range of performance opportunities afforded to them, including participation in prestigious events at The Royal Albert Hall, is contributing significantly to their enjoyment at school. The Flair Challenge project, in partnership with Harrow School, is also extending the students' broader educational experience which they greatly appreciate.

Area for development

- Extend the planned ICT outreach programme to include more 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

Mary Harlow
Her Majesty's Inspector