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Ms P Sargent  
The Headteacher  
Patcham High School  
Ladies Mile Road  
Brighton  
BN1 8BP

Dear Ms Sargent

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 2 and 3 December 2009 to look at your partnership with higher education.

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 and staff; scrutiny of documentation; visits to lessons; and meetings with students, parents, university undergraduates, representatives of Brighton University and Aimhigher.

Features of good practice

- The school is outward-looking, proactive and innovative in establishing and developing partnerships with higher-education providers. An impressive range of projects using the university's facilities and resources has increased students' learning and improved their motivation and self-esteem.
- Partnerships arising from the school's specialist arts and media status have made a significant contribution to improving the achievement and well-being of students. Excellent community and outreach work with local primary schools and adult-learning sessions are managed by the community arts coordinator to promote cohesion and increase access to learning in the wider community. The role of the community arts coordinator has the potential to contribute to the strategic development of community work and its impact across the school.

- The role of the non-teaching learning and teaching coach/professional tutor has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Effective partnerships with higher-education providers of initial teacher training have improved:
  - the subject knowledge and pedagogy of teachers, particularly in art, media, English and modern foreign languages departments
  - the capacity of leadership and the professional development of middle managers and teachers across the school
  - the engagement of students in well-planned and interactive lessons that use assessment to promote learning.
  
- The school has enhanced the curriculum very effectively by using the expertise offered by local universities. Excellent examples include:
  - the use of specialist media facilities for filming and editing student-led projects
  - a popular trip to Germany accompanied by university staff and undergraduates
  - a writing project for Year 6 and 7 pupils and their parents to inspire creative writing.
  
- The school works successfully with Aimhigher to provide challenging opportunities for targeted students who have the potential to enter higher and further education. Opportunities to take part in national competitions, residential summer schools and to interact with undergraduate student-ambassadors present students with a broader view of the world and a chance to talk to positive and inspiring role-models. In discussion, students said how much they value and enjoy these experiences and recognise the considerable improvements to their motivation, confidence and self-esteem.
  
- The school has been very successful in raising the aspirations of students and increasing the number of students progressing to further education. There are productive links at subject level with local colleges in art, modern foreign languages and media. However, the school receives limited information on the progress and well-being of students from the colleges and only has a partial picture of whether past students' aspirations of entering higher education have been realised.

#### Areas for development

- Formalise curriculum links with local colleges and establish procedures to receive information on the progress and well-being of students who enter further education, especially those that have been identified as having the potential to progress to higher education.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop partnerships to support 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

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector