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Mr D Smith
Headteacher
Paget High School, Business and Enterprise College
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Dear Mr Smith

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 the 14 and 15 January 2010 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 included: scrutiny of documentation; five observations of teaching and learning in vocational, enterprise, business-related courses and mathematics; a visit to the school farm; and discussions with you, other staff, students, governors, several business partners and a representative from your local business enterprise group.

Features of effective practice

- Everyone in your school shares a vision to raise aspirations, broaden horizons, increase self-esteem and give all students the necessary skills to be active and successful citizens in the future. Business partnerships are central to this vision and in providing students with as many opportunities as possible to gain experience of the world of work and real-life situations.
- Business partnerships have encouraged staff to be creative and enterprising in their approach to teaching and learning. Consequently, students enjoy their education and see its relevance to the wider world of work and Skills for Life. Parents value the opportunities open to their children and to themselves through family learning courses that help them to develop life skills.

- Governors have been instrumental in helping the school to establish some of its business partnerships. They are very committed to this aspect of the school's work and rightly proud of the impact the partnerships have on the local community, for example, through family learning courses and sharing business expertise.
- Examination results have improved markedly in Key Stages 4 and 5, including vocational and A-level subjects. Students' performance in business-related courses, English, mathematics and science is improving with a greater number gaining higher grades. Business partnerships have contributed to these improvements and you rightly intend to develop procedures for formally evaluating their impact.
- Business mentors and opportunities to meet business personnel have raised students' aspirations, motivation and self-esteem. Students value the advice and guidance from the business partners who come to the school to assess and discuss their work.
- Business partnerships contribute to the school's 'I can' culture. Students are encouraged to be enterprising and confident. Their increasingly positive attitudes are evident in their growing capacity to learn independently.
- Courses that have been adapted to include business or enterprise activities are growing in popularity with students. For example, more students are studying French in Key Stage 4 as a result of the introduction of business French. Your promotion of a business and enterprise culture, including business partnerships, is increasing the proportion of students going on to higher education.
- Business partnerships have broadened opportunities for staff's professional development. As a result, staff are more creative in developing projects that link subjects in unusual ways and help students to make connections in their learning.
- The business studies area is equipped extremely well and looks like a smart modern office environment. The fact that you offer working space for local business to hire within the learning environment gives students an excellent opportunity to experience the world of work within their school.
- The school farm is a shining example of innovation and creative educational practice. Business partnerships have contributed to the development of this excellent resource enjoyed by students and the local community.
- The quality of work-related learning is very high. Your key business partners tailor what they offer precisely to students' needs. You are right to explain that the school values fewer partners delivering high-quality support, rather than constantly seeking an even wider range of business partners.
- Your business partners see the benefits of investing in the future workforce and greatly value their links with the school.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- strengthening the procedures to formally evaluate the impact of partnerships on improved outcomes for students.

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

Judith Straw
Additional Inspector