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Mrs C Jenkinson-Dix
Principal
City of Ely Community College
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Dear Mrs Jenkinson-Dix

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 20 January 2010 to look at your partnership 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; four observations of lessons – two of which were in business studies; discussions with you, other staff and students and a member of the governing body; a visit to your community information technology suite and telephone conversations with business partners.

Features of effective practice

- A range of partnerships with local businesses is well established and contributes positively to the curriculum. New partnerships with national and international businesses are also underway. These are expanding the college's capacity to offer diverse experiences to students.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is effectively enriched by business partnerships which are less influential in Key Stage 3. Cross-curricular projects bring together learning from a range of subjects and involve businesses. Such projects are very popular among students and staff. Both are keen to build upon these successes and provide further opportunities for different subjects to work together to deliver an engaging and exciting curriculum, especially in Key Stage 3. The involvement of key areas of the

curriculum, such as English and mathematics, in these projects is at an early stage of development.

- Partnerships have a positive impact on students' personal development, particularly in Key Stage 4, where students demonstrate mature and considered attitudes when discussing their own learning and are proud to be involved with partners outside the college.
- Business partners contribute to effective guidance and support which help students to make the right choices about their futures. The local knowledge and networking derived from business partnerships result in work experience that is generally matched very well to the needs of individual students.
- Business partners value their work with the college, citing recruitment and a positive impact on the economic well-being of the local community as important benefits. Partners are also very positive about the constructive attitudes that students bring to work experience, visits, shadowing and presentations.
- The college actively seeks and finds new partners, making good use of its experience to ensure that links are nurtured and sustained. Businesses identify the high quality of communication and organisation provided by the college as a major factor in the success of their partnerships.
- Staff at the college are given opportunities to develop leadership skills as a result of the partnerships, engaging with outside agencies and liaising with other schools to coordinate learning opportunities.
- The college provides a very wide range of adult learning opportunities and offers support for local businesses in areas such as information and communication technology. Over 500 adults access the college's courses, allowing local people to benefit from its facilities.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- extending opportunities for cross-curricular projects in Key Stage 3.

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

Chris Moodie
Additional Inspector