

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)



8 February 2010

Mr A Brookes  
Headteacher  
Fulston Manor School  
Brenchley Road  
Sittingbourne  
ME10 4EG

Dear Mr Brookes

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 25 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; observations of teaching and learning; discussions with senior leaders, other staff and students; and a telephone conversation with a business partner.

Features of effective practice

- Partnerships are at the heart of your school's strong commitment to continuous improvement and enabling all students to realise their potential. Business links and specialism in business and enterprise have contributed powerfully to a curriculum that is closely matched to students' needs and results in a breadth of high achievement.
- The development of the curriculum is ongoing. Working with business partners will be an important aspect of the school's plans to implement two new Diplomas and increase the number of students studying languages.
- Partnership with business and other schools takes a central position in your well-structured school improvement plan. The plan is a working document, easily accessed by staff and a constant source of reference and reflection.

- Business partnerships and enterprise activities make an important contribution to students' personal development and enjoyment of school. There are excellent opportunities for students to develop communication, presentation, team-building and leadership skills. As a result, students develop into confident individuals with a desire to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.
- Students enjoy and benefit from the regular focus days where subjects work together on cross-curricular projects. These projects enable students to make connections in their learning and challenge them to apply subject and enterprise skills independently. Subject departments have been encouraged to develop business partnerships to increase opportunities for students to learn in purposeful, real-world contexts.
- The school has devised an exemplary system for embedding and tracking enterprise skills within and across subjects. A key business partner supports this initiative which enables students and staff to evaluate how well they are developing enterprise skills. The system also ensures there is consistency in the teaching and assessment of enterprise skills.
- The effective use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning has been central to the success of business-related courses and cross-curricular enterprise challenges. Good access to computers is helping students to raise the standard of their work.
- Students benefit from very good, work-related learning opportunities. Business partners are instrumental in offering work-placements, supporting visits and residential conferences. They also contribute to alternative provision for students, helping to sustain their engagement with learning and increase their employability.
- The school shares the benefits of its partnerships with local primary schools. Excellent outreach work includes an initiative to integrate enterprise skills into the primary curriculum.
- Very good professional development opportunities increase staff's skills and knowledge of business and enterprise and make them aware of how different curriculum areas capitalise on the school's business links.
- Leadership responsibilities have been distributed successfully as roles have been developed to sustain partnership work and increase its impact on improving outcomes for students. For example, every subject team has an enterprise ambassador.
- The school's Business Centre is an excellent resource for teaching and learning. In addition, it has been developed into a hub for community groups. Access to this high-quality facility supports work to improve the economic well-being of the wider community.
- Business partners believe their relationship with the school is mutually beneficial. Sharing common values and demonstrating the importance of values, such as trust and respect in business, have been fundamental. Business employees feel enriched by the recognition that their skills and knowledge can support students and raise their aspirations.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- sustaining the involvement of business partners in current curriculum development priorities, particularly the implementation of two new Diplomas and increasing the number of students studying languages.

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