

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr S Baker
Principal
Lipson Community College
Bernice Terrace
Lipson
Plymouth
PL4 7PG

Dear Mr Baker

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: the impact that links between parents/carers and schools have on supporting and encouraging young people's achievement, well-being and personal development

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 and 11 March 2010 to look at the impact that links between parents/carers and schools have on supporting and encouraging young people's achievement, well-being and personal development.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the aspect, the visit had a particular focus on how the school's work with parents and carers affects a range of outcomes for students.

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.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, governors, students, and individual and groups of parents; scrutiny of relevant documentation and students' records of achievement; and a visit to your early years provision, including the neighbouring Children's Centre.

The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents/carers and its impact on the outcomes for students are outstanding.

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes

The impact of parental involvement on outcomes is outstanding.

- The college enjoys a highly positive relationship with all groups of parents and carers, particularly those parents and carers who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. It provides a wealth of opportunities

for parents and carers to support their children's learning and to be involved regularly in supporting the work of the school.

- Regular communications with parents and carers are conducted in a professional yet friendly and non-judgemental way. Information collected from parents and carers is used effectively to direct planning, maximise progress and keep students' learning relevant to their interests and needs.
- Parents and carers are provided with tailored guidance and information about ways they can support their children's learning and development. They are matched well to the unique needs of the local community as well as the needs of parents and carers.
- Attendance by parents and carers at college events and support for students is high. Parents say they are very well informed about their children's achievement, well-being and development.

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of provision

The impact of parental involvement on the quality of provision is outstanding.

- Well-established communication systems allow parents to have an independent voice that also offers a real strategic role within the development of the college. However, the college is aware that a minority of parents and carers are not currently able to access electronic forms of communication.
- Parental expertise is used extensively and imaginatively as a resource for learning and in the curriculum.
- Through regular and high-quality guidance, advice and information parents are enabled to contribute to the process of assessment for learning and target-setting.
- Parents have many opportunities to become involved in the work and life of the college. They are provided with a variety of methods, including training, to support their children's learning at home and in college.

The impact of the parental involvement on inclusion

The impact of the parental involvement on inclusion is outstanding.

- The excellent partnerships with outside agencies ensure that provision is matched very well to the assessed local needs of students and their families.
- Through the school's close dialogue with parents and carers, any barriers to students' learning are swiftly identified and strategies introduced to promote their learning and development.
- Families who find communicating with the college a challenge are provided with whatever support is necessary to establish a meaningful working relationship that will lead to the support and success of their children.

- Outcomes from parents' and carers' evaluations and the school's own assessments are used together to inform planning and keep learning experiences relevant for students.

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents

The impact of leadership and management on the involvement of parents is outstanding.

- The college is respected as the hub of an extensive and well-embedded partnership with external support agencies. All staff work assiduously to remove any barriers that may hinder a student's potential to achieve. Almost all students make outstanding progress in all aspects of their achievement, well-being and development.
- The role of the personal tutors is crucial to the success of the college's work. They work untiringly in liaising with parents and carers to establish respectful relationships that lead to genuine partnerships and better outcomes for students.
- Senior leaders ensure the learning needs and welfare of all young people are the responsibility of all members of staff.
- All staff receive training to understand and adhere to school policies that promote and sustain very effective communication with parents.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- making the benefits of the school's e-portal available to all parents.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the impact of the work of parents and carers in the college.

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

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector