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Mrs Allen
Headteacher
Whitley Abbey Business and Enterprise College
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Dear Mrs Allen

Ofsted survey: good practice in the development of leadership skills and effectiveness

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 April 2009 to look at the work that you are doing to develop and sustain high quality leadership in your school.

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 made included: a review of documentation and assessment information, lessons observation and discussions with staff, students and the Chair of Governors.

Features of good practice observed

- Leadership and management are very effective at all levels in the school. As a result of this effective leadership achievement is **outstanding**. The curriculum meets the needs of students **outstandingly** well and care support and guidance is highly effective in ensuring students receive the support they need to be successful.
- The headteacher has high expectations and she has been very successful in ensuring these permeate every part of the school. High levels of accountability are maintained through effective monitoring and evaluation. The school has used the opportunities presented by workforce reform very well to ensure the effective use of a range of adults in supporting students and their parents
- Monitoring and evaluation has developed to reflect the growing confidence and capacity of middle leaders who are increasingly at the heart of review activity. Where areas for improvement are identified departments respond quickly because there is confidence that the

judgments are correct and everyone knows that progress on the issues identified will be monitored closely.

- The introduction of cross-curricular approaches in Years 7 and 8 has been a stimulus for staff development. The traditional barriers between subjects have been lowered as teachers have taken responsibility for an increased range of subjects. Staff are very willing to learn from each other and have become adept at adopting approaches from one subject, so they can be used in another.
- Staff are united in their view that they have developed as leaders largely because of the opportunities they have had to undertake school improvement. The school now has the leadership capacity required to support other schools and recognises that such collaboration can bring further benefits.
- Staff value the opportunities they have to participate in various leadership programmes, for instance Leading from the Middle and the National Qualification for Headship. These have increased the confidence of staff as they have been able to reflect on their practice more deeply.

Areas for development

- Focus leaders' monitoring and evaluation activity on the learning and progress made by different groups of students

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your work in this area.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector