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Mrs C Spencer
Headteacher
Salendine Nook High School
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West Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs Spencer

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 higher education.

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, discussions with you, other staff, students and higher education partners.

Features of effective practice

- The school has a clear understanding of the importance of partnership links with higher education to raise aspirations and broaden students' horizons. Leaders and governors provide good levels of support to sustain and develop partnerships.
- Students' growing aspirations are resulting in above-average standards and high levels of achievement in relation to their starting points on entry to the school.
- Links with higher education, especially in initial teacher training, are used effectively to raise the quality of teaching and to provide professional development opportunities for subject managers. The school and teacher-training establishments are keen to evaluate this work more formally.
- The school uses Aimhigher and its specialism in technology very effectively to promote links with local colleges and higher education.

- All Year 10 students visit a university. They say how much this 'whets their appetite' and makes them determined to go to university. Links with higher education are successfully raising students' aspirations and their levels of self-confidence and self-belief.
- The positive impact of forging links with higher education is evident in the increasing numbers continuing in full-time education and the rapid rise in the proportion of past students entering higher education. In 2009, for example, 49% of students who left the school in 2007 went on to higher education; the highest figure ever for the school. The school wants to invite former students who are at university to act as role-models for those just setting out on the same path.
- This is an inclusive school offering high levels of care, guidance and support to students throughout their time at school. Every student receives detailed individual guidance about appropriate courses and qualifications in Key Stages 3 and 4. Parents too are closely involved in the process of career and qualifications guidance.
- The personal, social and health programme is especially effective in making sure students know what career options are available to them and what qualifications they will need to be successful in higher education.
- The school's development of vocational courses and qualifications in Key Stage 4 is proving very successful in enabling increasing numbers of students to continue in full-time education when they leave school.

Areas for development, which we discussed, include:

- evaluating the impact of links with initial teacher training more fully
- inviting former students who are at university to act as role-models and further raising the profile of higher education.

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

Stephen Wall
Additional Inspector