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Mrs M Hunter
Principal
Xaverian College
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Dear Mrs Hunter

Ofsted 2011/12 best practice survey: supporting college students to progress and achieve

Thank you for your warm welcome and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 31 January and 1 February 2012 to look at your work in supporting students to progress and achieve.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in supporting college students. The publication will include case studies about individual providers. If your college is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment prior to publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included scrutiny of documentation and meetings with senior managers, support staff and students.

Features of good practice observed

- The college's mission to develop the whole student underpins the extremely high priority given to pastoral support. An extensive network of internal support and strong collaboration with external organisations helps students, especially those who are most vulnerable, stay at college and achieve outstanding results.
- Excellent links between academic and pastoral support are in place. Pastoral roles are carried out by teachers and this is a significant factor in promoting the strong teamwork that results in high quality personalised support for individuals.
- The college demonstrates an innovative approach to individual learning plans (ILP). A bespoke electronic system is valued highly by students because it helps keep them on track and motivated, and is extremely easy to use.

- High quality electronic learning materials that are accessible and help promote a culture of independent learning are provided. A well-established subject support system, linked to the electronic ILP is instrumental in enabling students to meet and exceed their targets.
- The college has an all-pervasive 'can do' culture. Very committed and well-trained staff have high expectations of all their students.
- Considerable investment in staff development is in place, combined with a strong focus on sharing best practice within the college and externally with other sixth form colleges in the North of England.
- A comprehensive group tutorial programme and wide-ranging enrichment activities help students broaden their outlook and views, develop personally and improve self-esteem.
- Rigorous quality assurance procedures monitor all aspects of pastoral and academic support. Ongoing evaluations by staff and students are used routinely to inform the strategic development of student support services. This ensures good value for money and improves students' progress and achievement at all levels.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- using the college's analysis of participation in enrichment activities by different groups of students to inform and shape the enrichment offer and to encourage more students to develop their talents
- ensuring that individual action points for students are more consistently written to the highest quality.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your approaches to providing support for your students. As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

**Josephine Nowacki HMI
Her Majesty's Inspector**