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Mr S Aveyard
Headteacher
The Albion High School
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Dear Mr Aveyard

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: a review of anti-bullying practice in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 26 September 2011 as part of our survey of schools' work to create a positive school culture and prevent and tackle bullying.

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.

This letter briefly summarises our discussion at the end of the visit.

Strengths of this aspect of the school's work

- Students know who to report incidents of bullying to and are confident that appropriate and swift action will be taken. They expressed a clear understanding that racism in any form was unacceptable and students from different ethnic backgrounds confirmed that racist incidents or language were very rare. They have less understanding of other discriminatory behaviour. Sexist and homophobic language is often heard in classrooms and around the school as is the derogatory use of disability-related terms.
- School data support the views of staff and students that strategies for managing behaviour have significantly improved the school's culture and reduced the incidents of bullying in recent years. These include effective systems for monitoring and tracking behaviour and the installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in all public areas.
- Students spoken to say they enjoy school and feel safe. However, some in lower years reported that they are uncomfortable at witnessing students smoking on the school premises and sometimes feel intimidated by them.

- Students understand well the school's expectations of behaviour and how these link to the consistently applied rewards and sanctions systems. The code of conduct posters in every classroom act as a prompt and the rules are regularly reinforced by form tutors and in assemblies.
- Students feel confident to seek help if they need it, from a wide range of adults including learning mentors, pastoral heads, form tutors and the on-site police officer. Most students spoken to said that they would readily report any bullying they had experienced or witnessed.
- Year 6 'Transition Days' and the induction programme ensure that new arrivals understand the school's expectations of behaviour and where to go for help and advice. A significant proportion of students enter the school other than at the usual times, many from overseas. These students reported little or no experience of bullying since arriving at the school.
- Issues of cultural diversity and bullying are addressed through the curriculum. The 'Self and Society' programme at Key Stage 3 gives a high profile to understanding racial diversity in the local community. A course in the effects of cyber-bullying in Years 7 and 8 teaches students how to keep themselves safe and the consequences of this type of bullying.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that staff are trained to tackle all forms of prejudice- based language and behaviour effectively, including the use of homophobic and sexist language and the derogatory use of disability-based terms
- ensuring that school data on behaviour and incidents of bullying are analysed to inform improvement planning
- including students, parents and carers in the development of the school's behaviour policy and in the evaluation of impact
- Continue and increase action to tackle the incidents of students smoking on the school premises.

I hope that this visit has been useful in the further development of this aspect of the school's work.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector