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Mr J Parker
Principal
Heathfield Foundation Technology College
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Dear Mr Parker

Ofsted subject survey: good practice in promoting equality

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff at Heathfield Foundation Technology College, during my visit on the 07 October 2008 to look at work in promoting equality.

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: interviews with staff and pupils, interview with a governor, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observations of four lessons.

The quality of provision to promote equalities is good.

Features of good practice observed

- The school effectively uses its funding from a variety of sources to ensure there is an enhanced level of staffing across the school. The school does not use agency or supply staff, instead factoring in predicted staff absence so that lessons are covered by teachers the pupils know. Cover lessons, known as "Rota Lessons" are therefore taught by teachers who know the school, its ethos, and policies, and are frequently delivered by subject specialists. As a result pupils note that they know their teachers well. This helps to create a calm and secure atmosphere with high expectations.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is consistently good or better and as a result pupils with additional needs, for example those with learning difficulties, feel safe.
- Pupils value what the school does to ensure their progress and comment warmly on the attention they get from teachers and other staff: "All I've ever

experienced is good stuff and help. They don't go the extra mile – they go the extra ten miles.”

- The school regularly surveys pupils and acts promptly on any findings. For example a bullying survey identified potential “hot spots” where some pupils did not feel safe. The school quickly changed staff duties to ensure these areas were closely monitored. This vigilance ensures that all pupils, not just those with additional needs, such as medical or mental health issues, rarely experience bullying.
- Equal Opportunities are deeply embedded in the culture of the school. A wide and varied curriculum with a variety of pathways allows equality of access to provision. Children who are looked after by the local authority, those who have experienced mental health issues, and those with statements all agree that no-one is discriminated against.
- The school works to ensure successful pupil transition from primary to secondary. Year 6 pupils from feeder primaries visit the school and have taster lessons. Pupils with additional needs are identified and those parents and pupils are invited into school to discuss any extra support the pupil needs.
- The school places all lesson plans and appropriate resources on an intranet which can be remotely accessed by both staff and pupils. This means that pupils who are absent can maintain progress by downloading work or completing tasks online.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop promoting equalities in Heathfield Foundation Technology College.

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

David McMahon
Additional Inspector