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Mr K Fraser  
Principal  
Macmillan Academy  
PO Box 8  
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Dear Mr Fraser

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in literacy

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 8 February 2010 to look at work in literacy.

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 interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of two lessons.

Features of good practice

- The central role of literacy in learning receives prominent and very effective attention across all subjects. This reflects the high priority the academy's leadership team gives to the promotion of literacy.
- The very close partnership between the English department, the Learning Support team and the Advanced Skills Teacher for literacy has a very strong impact on the progress of students of all abilities in English and other subjects.
- The outstanding leadership of the exciting library provision successfully encourages the students to read frequently. A memorable highlight of the visit was the very enthusiastic way the students talked about their personal reading.
- The academy's innovative curriculum provides the students with many well-planned opportunities to apply and improve their literacy skills through enjoyable experiences, such as the outdoor learning programme

activities. Good learning opportunities also emerge from teachers of different subjects jointly planning and teaching imaginative topics such as 'Time Travel' that stay in the students' minds long after the event.

- The academy is very open in its contacts with parents and directly involves them in supporting their children's learning and literacy.
- Procedures for helping the students to settle into the academy at the start of Year 7 are very good. They quickly help the students to understand how positively the academy expects them to approach learning and how high their aspirations must be. They also help the academy to quickly identify and support those who need extra help.

#### Areas for development

- We discussed increasing the proportion of students that gain the very highest grades in English at GCSE. The English department's plans for achieving this are well-founded and provide a good basis for future progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Griffin  
Additional Inspector