

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



1 December 2010

Mr N Hall  
Headteacher  
Winchcombe School  
Greet Road  
Winchcombe  
Cheltenham  
GL54 5LB

Dear Mr Hall

### **Ofsted 2010–11 best practice survey: school governance**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 November 2010 to look at school governance.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in school governance. The publication will include case studies about individual schools. If Winchcombe School 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 identification of features of best practice included: discussions with seven governors, including the Chair and Vice-Chair, with the clerk, representatives of the school parliament and relevant members of staff; and scrutiny of a range of documents, including the minutes of meetings of the full governing body and of its committees.

### **Features of best practice**

- The governing body works within a climate of trust and respect where governors and staff have a firm grasp of their respective responsibilities. This enables the governors to fulfil their role very well.
- The governing body is very well organised and benefits from the detailed work of its committees in considering the progress of the school, and very good support from its clerk.
- Governors are very well informed about the work of the school through detailed reports from you and other key staff and from visiting the school themselves. As a result, governors are very well placed to ask questions about the school's performance and seek explanations from senior staff.

Questions elicit a positive response from senior leaders and result, where appropriate, in reviews and revisions of practice.

- The governing body is rigorous in insisting on carefully considered proposals for new developments and in any subsequent discussions and evaluations to ensure that any changes are best for the school and its pupils.
- The governors have successfully established the school at the forefront of the local community and as a key part of the life of the town. This has enabled pupils to benefit in their learning from a wide range of expertise from outside the school.

### **Areas for development**

- The governing body to consider establishing a more systematic and planned approach to developing governors' skills and inviting a representative of the school parliament to attend their meetings.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to further develop governance.

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

**Grahame Sherfield**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**