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Mr M Silverman  
Tresham College of Further and Higher Education  
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NN15 6ER

Dear Mr Silverman

**Ofsted 2010–11 good practice survey programme: improving science in colleges**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 23 and 24 March 2011 as part of our science survey.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to a national report. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributors or contributing institutions but individuals and institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence base included: meetings with senior managers, the heads of schools, teaching staff and students; observations of three lessons; discussions with students in and outside lessons; reviews of students' work; analysis of documentation; and a tour of the science department accommodation.

**Features of good practice**

- A high proportion of science learners who achieve their qualifications progress to science-related courses at university. This applies equally to students on A-level courses and to adults following the access to higher education programmes.
- The well-qualified teachers provide high standards of professional practice and have high expectations for their students. They show enthusiasm and passion for their subjects and for the promotion of students' learning and understanding.

- Teachers use a variety of questioning strategies well to ensure that students are learning and developing understanding of scientific concepts. Students speak particularly highly of the help and support that all their teachers provide within and outside lessons.
- Written work is marked well and accurately assessed with helpful comments on how the students can improve.
- The science technician is deployed effectively by teachers across two college schools and ably provides assistance with practical work when required. She assists teachers well by researching contemporary materials online to support their lessons.
- Managers take into account trends in students' participation and listen to the needs of potential learners well when developing the curriculum. Further developments to the science curriculum at intermediate, advanced and higher levels are being planned, some through collaboration with other organisations.

**Areas for development, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that opportunities are available for, and used by, all staff to share examples of good practice in all aspects of teaching and learning
- further developing course-related enrichment opportunities for students to enhance their understanding of science industries and their enjoyment of the courses
- improving the use of information and learning technologies and the virtual learning environment within lessons and by students outside lessons to enhance their learning and to develop independent learning
- involving all science staff in discussions on further developing the science curriculum.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop science provision.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant funding bodies and will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Yours sincerely

**Nigel Fletcher**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**