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Dr R Wilkinson  
Principal  
Hills Road Sixth Form College  
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Dear Dr Wilkinson

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5 December 2007 to look at the way that learning outside the classroom contributes to your college's curriculum and to learners' achievement and personal development.

Thank you too for organising my day and the time you gave me during my visit to identify good practice and areas for improvement, outlined below. I very much appreciated the discussions I had with yourself, senior staff and students and the access you gave me to relevant documentation and teaching sessions.

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. All feedback letters are published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

Good practice identified included:

- LOTC is integral to the college curriculum and is encouraged and supported effectively by senior managers.
- The college organises activities outside the classroom for local schools, including conferences and college taster sessions.
- College students arrange LOTC for Year 8 and 9 pupils. A Lego league is run by students on Saturdays which provides local pupils with practical experience of robotics.
- College art students visit local schools and introduce pupils there to various art mediums.

- The student council is proactive in identifying and organising activities outside the classroom for college students. It arranges all student balls and there are approximately fifty student-run societies.
- Students have access to an extensive and well-planned enrichment programme, cross-referenced to the Every Child Matters outcomes. This programme is timetabled into students' schedules. Lunch breaks are designed and timed to allow them additional access to enrichment activities.
- The college is successfully committed to work-related learning as a means of learning 'about work,' 'through work' and 'for work'.
- The college runs a number of vocational courses and voluntary work experience places. For example, students wishing to follow a medical career are encouraged to volunteer for work experience at Addenbrooke's Hospital.
- There is a fund available for students who receive education maintenance allowance (EMA) to support them in undertaking costly activities outside the regular curriculum.
- You have successfully reduced the administrative burden associated with some aspects of LOTC. There is, for example, an easy to use set of templates for planning visits as well as appropriate generic risk assessments available for staff.

Areas for development which we discussed included:

- Although there are some good examples of your measuring the impact of activities outside the classroom, there is no systematic collection of this evidence to measure its effect on achievement or personal development and well-being in subject sector areas.

A copy of this letter will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Bob Hamp  
Her Majesty's Inspector