

1 December 2010

Mrs J Wilkinson
Headteacher
Belmont School Community Arts School
Buckinghamshire Road
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Dear Mrs Wilkinson

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 9 November 2010 to look at your school's use of alternative provision.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on examining the use of alternative provision for pupils who are vulnerable to underachieving, and the impact that this has on the outcomes for these pupils.

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.

This letter briefly summarises our discussion at the end of the visit.

Outcomes

- The school has used external placements for identified students for a number of years. The number of students that are vulnerable to underachieving, who follow a programme of work experience, has reduced as the curriculum has been adapted to better meet the needs of students.
- Local collaboration between schools means that students have access to a greater variety of courses and many complete Young Apprenticeships. These courses include a significant element of work experience. For example, students follow courses in sports leadership, construction or animal care.
- Attendance for individuals taking part in this provision has improved, as have students' confidence and maturity.

- Students all attain suitable BTEC qualifications alongside their work-based skills. Students currently attending placements felt that they were learning important skills, including how to work effectively with others and how to communicate appropriately with other adults, especially customers. As one student said and the others agreed, 'I really enjoy working with other adults as you get on well and they take a real interest in me.' Another commented that her mother had noticed how she had gained greater confidence, while a boy remarked that his parents felt he was more responsible. This is preparing them well for their future education, employment or training.

Selecting and commissioning

- The school works well with the local education business partnership to identify suitable placements and to undergo appropriate safeguarding and health and safety checks. The deputy headteacher ensures that students are matched to an appropriate area.
- Because places on the sports leadership course are limited, students have to write letters of application to gain a place through a competitive process. Parents are involved closely with this selection process.

Monitoring, evaluation and support

- The school has well-established checks to ensure that students progress well with their placements.
- Although the school has built up good procedures to monitor the progress of students who attend other educational establishments, it does not always monitor how well students develop in confidence and communication skills.
- Students feel very well supported by the school and their placement and they commented that it certainly made a difference to the way in which they are working this year.

I hope that this visit has been useful in the further development of this aspect of the school's work.

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

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector