

Tribal Education
1–4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk
Direct T 0845 123 6001
Direct F 0845 123 6002
email: sarah.cartlidge@tribalgroup.com



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Ms M Clay
Headteacher
Thanet and Dover Alternative Curriculum PRU
Project 15
Artwise Centre
St Luke's Avenue
Ramsgate
Kent
CT11 7HS

Dear Ms Clay

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Thanet and Dover Alternative Curriculum PRU

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, pupils, chair of the management committee and parents for providing me with valuable comments on the centre's work.

The centre provides more student places than it did at the last inspection. Apart from the commissioned provision at local colleges, the centre directly now runs and manages all of its own programmes, including Project 15 and a peripatetic intensive support team. The senior management team has been recently reorganised.

As a result of the inspection on 29–30 January 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

good progress in making improvements

and

good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



Pupils who join the centre have had a fragmented and negative experience of schooling and there are significant gaps in their learning. As a result, their attainment is well below average. At the centre, pupils are treated with respect and tolerance. This and the individual attention they receive help them regain their self-esteem and their enjoyment of learning. Pupils' attainment and overall progress continue to rise well, particularly in literacy. The appointment of well-qualified subject specialists is having a positive impact.

Teaching and learning are continuing to improve. In most lessons, there is a good pace with frequent changes of learning activities so that pupils maintain their interest and do not become unsettled or bored. Staff work together well as a team to provide good role models of what can be achieved by effective cooperation. Staff are kind and friendly even when managing difficult behaviour, although staff who are relatively inexperienced are less effective in this. In some lessons, teachers do not yet provide a close enough match between the level of the activities and the differing needs of the pupils, especially those who are more able.

Senior staff have improved the system used to measure pupils' progress. The centre uses a good range of assessments to establish the pupils' starting points in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Teachers assess progress at frequent, regular intervals throughout the year and the new user-friendly 'traffic light' system enables teachers to incorporate the information into lesson plans. Senior managers make a regular analysis of the relative achievement for different groups of students. The system is too new to measure its impact on learning and progress, although there are early signs of a positive effect. Attendance is now being tracked well and staff record the improvement students have made since joining the centre and since they were at school. The centre effectively collects data on students' behaviour and is currently improving the way in which it analyses and summarises the information. There is good evidence that behaviour and attendance are improving quickly.

The centre promotes community cohesion through a planned programme, based on an audit. There are good outcomes at the local level, but pupils' contributions to the national and global community are at an early stage of development. Pupils make their opinions known through a pupils' council and more widely through the local youth forums. Pupils now undertake additional responsibilities such as peer mentoring and sports leadership. The centre gives the pupils good opportunities to make a positive contribution to their local community, for example through an attached playgroup in Deal where they work with the children. Pupils on college construction courses are working in a primary school to repaint benches and build walls.

The school is now able to evaluate its own provision more accurately through its new data system. It is establishing a tangible track record of improvement in improving behaviour and attendance. The new streamlined senior management team is working effectively across the service to ensure consistency in the quality



of the provision. These factors show that the centre is now better placed to further sustain improvement.

The local authority provides good support for the school through the proactive management committee and through the effective assistance of the centre's improvement partner.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee
Additional inspector



Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2009

- Provide more frequent and detailed analysis of data on pupils' academic progress and all aspects of personal development to enable centres to target guidance and support more precisely and raise standards.
- Improve teaching and learning, including lesson pace and behaviour management, to match the quality evident in the best lessons.
- Improve pupils' contribution to the community, building on existing good practice.