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Mr G Dawkins
Headteacher
Bradford Academy
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Dear Mr Dawkins

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation and that of your staff when I visited your school on 11 November 2010. Please also pass on my thanks to the students with whom I had helpful discussions.

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 academy's evaluation indicates that last year the large majority of students who attended an alternative provision placement improved their attendance at school and sustained their involvement in learning.
- Attendance at the alternative provision enables students to gain vocational qualifications which complement accredited courses available at the academy.
- The range of provision enabled 75% of students who attended alternative provision to gain the equivalent of five A* to G grades at GCSE in 2010, which was a significant improvement on the previous year. The large majority of students progressed to education or further training.

- Students currently attending placements felt that they were learning important skills which would help them with their future employment.

Selecting and commissioning

- The academy has access to a range of alternative provision which is selected and commissioned in collaboration with partner schools and includes the South Bradford Vocational Centre.
- Alternative provision is chosen carefully to complement the academy's curriculum and to supplement provision at its off-site centre for students who need more intensive individual support.
- The academy values the work of the local authority's inclusion service in suggesting possible providers and in vetting their suitability.
- The academy feels that the work of the partnership could be extended further to draw in other potential providers.

Monitoring, evaluation and support

- The academy makes daily checks on each student's attendance and any non-attendance is followed up quickly. The academy works closely with providers to check students' progress and has a range of information to show the overall impact of the alternative provision.
- Students feel well supported and value the opportunity to learn practical skills. They feel that the balance between time spent at school and with an alternative provider works well. Some would welcome the extension of alternative provision to offer a greater range of options from which to choose.

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.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
Her Majesty's Inspector