

1 December 2010

Mr A Senior
Headteacher
Netherthorpe School
Ralph Road
Staveley
Chesterfield
S43 3PU

Dear Mr Senior

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 10 November 2010 to look at your school's use of alternative provision. Please pass on my special thanks to the vocational education coordinator and to the young people who came to talk to me.

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 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

- Students feel very strongly that they are actively involved in making choices about alternative placements; they take their choices and commitment to them very seriously and believe that the courses will help them to get a job in the future.
- Students say that the work that they do while on placement helps them to focus on their other subjects when they are back in school because the practical work that they do gives them a break from writing things down all the time. They are also very pleased that they do not miss out on lessons for other subjects while on placements.
- Students' attendance at the placements is good and very few drop out of the courses.

- The accreditation that students gain on placement helps to boost their overall GCSE attainment.

Selecting and commissioning

- The way that alternative educational placements are organised within the wider options for all Year 10 and 11 students ensures that vocational options have equal status to the more academic subjects.
- The commissioning of alternative educational providers allows for flexibility and choice for students of all abilities and interests.

Monitoring, evaluation and support

- The school values the partnership of the learning community in sharing the monitoring and evaluation of the alternative educational placements.
- The school does not specifically monitor the outcomes for this particular group of students, although the data are available to do so.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop alternative provision at your school.

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

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector