

15 October 2010

Ms Newsome
Principal
Babington Community Technology College
Strasbourg Drive
Beaumont Leys
Leicester
LE4 0SZ

Dear Ms Newsome

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 5 October 2010 look at your college's use of alternative provision.

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

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 alternative education programme engages some of the college's most vulnerable students. They articulate well how it has improved their self-confidence, provided them with interesting and relevant learning opportunities and enabled them to settle better in mainstream subjects.
- The college has worked, generally to good effect, with alternative education providers to ensure that their courses increasingly operate at a level that matches students' needs and predicted performance.
- Although college attainment is low when compared with national averages, results have improved over the last two years. Results have also improved for students taking the college's 'specialist programme' which incorporates alternative provision.
- Case studies provided by the college demonstrate good student progression in relation to their education, behaviour, aspirations and attendance.

Selecting and commissioning

- The breadth of commissioned provision meets the needs and interests of those students interviewed. It spans vocational subjects, sport, childcare, and opportunities in dance or media.
- The college works with VESA, a city-wide and county-wide 13–19 collaboration, to develop education and training, in particular the 'Future Pathways' programme designed for students who have underachieved at Key Stage 3 and may be disengaged. This commissioning arrangement suits the needs of the college well.
- Beyond that, the college manages its commissioning arrangements in a forward-looking and constructive manner. Providers are well-briefed about individual students' needs including an informative key stage report setting out effort grades, attendance, targets and a student self-assessment.
- Vital aspects of the alternative education programme such as insurance, safeguarding, risk assessment and the transfer of day-to-day information are managed securely by the college.

Monitoring, evaluation and support

- College managers have taken recent and effective action to improve monitoring, evaluation and support; alternative education has a clear and distinct role in college improvement.
- Case studies provided by the college illustrate well the challenging issues which some individual students face, for example in relation to language and communication. They also demonstrate how the college monitors students' personal and academic progress.
- The city-wide collaborative learning manager (CLM) online system provides an instant record of attendance on courses wherever they are. This enables the college to act swiftly in the case of a student's absence. CLM also acts as a collective record of vocational and academic progress. Behaviour issues and incidents are also recorded on this system.
- The college intervention mentor carries out weekly telephone checks with providers, periodic visits and termly progress report meetings.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop alternative provision in the college.

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

Tony Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector