

8 October 2010

Mrs C Haddrell  
Headteacher  
St Bartholomew's School  
Andover Road  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 6JP

Dear Mrs Haddrell

### **Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 23 September 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 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**

- Students who attend alternative provision gain appropriate results in the core curriculum alongside qualifications such as BTEC and the Certificate in Preparation for Working Life. The large majority of students exceed their challenging targets. This is because the school tailors courses effectively to meet the needs of individual students through its differentiated curriculum.
- Students who previously attended alternative provision agree with those currently in Key Stage 4 that they develop important skills, such as taking responsibility for organising their work and community events, and communicating with others.
- Key to the students' success is their sense of achievement. This in turn gives them the confidence and self-esteem to continue with their education. For example, a student said, 'I felt I achieved something when the employer signed my self-assessment booklet,' and this encouraged her to pursue a further child care course at college.

- The school's monitoring shows good improvements in the students' attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning since they embarked on the provision.
- In 2010, all students in Year 11 went on to study further courses either in the school's sixth form or at college. This included those who were likely not to be in education, employment or training.

### **Selecting and commissioning**

- The school is supported well by the local authority in selecting and commissioning a wide range of suitable alternative provision. This involves the Education Business Partnership and Reintegration Service for students in danger of becoming permanently excluded.
- Placements are matched appropriately to students' needs and all lead to accreditation.
- Teachers evaluate the suitability of placements thoroughly by visiting them and they ensure that the providers are well aware of the students' individual needs.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and support**

- Students praise the school's detailed system for monitoring and evaluating their progress in developing specific work skills. The teacher in charge shares the progress tracking records with them regularly and provides very effective feedback on how they can improve their work.
- In addition, students are proud of their self-assessment booklets which are signed off by the employers and submitted for external verification. The records include, appropriately, some personal and social skills, such as personal effectiveness and effective communication.
- Students particularly value the fact that one member of staff has the overview of their progress and knows them well.
- They say the support they receive from their teachers, including when they visit their placements, helps them to feel well prepared for the world of work.
- They feel they are supported appropriately to catch up on lessons missed while they are out of school on placements. They state that the benefits of the placements outweigh the fact that they miss some lessons.
- The school has effective systems for monitoring and evaluating students' attendance and behaviour.
- It is considering ways of evaluating the impact of alternative provision on students' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

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

**Sue Frater**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**