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Mr A Goulding
Principal
Hinchingsbrooke School
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Dear Mr Goulding

13 survey inspection programme: schools' use of alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 22 and 23 October 2012 to look at the school's use of alternative provision.

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.

Strengths of this aspect of the school's work

- The school has established a range of procedures to manage students' behaviour effectively and retain them in learning in school. Strong partnerships with other local schools and the local authority enable the school to procure alternative arrangements for a small minority of students displaying challenging behaviour or who are not suited to full-time learning on the school site.
- The school's inclusion team, managed by a senior teacher, provides intensive care and support for these students. They work collaboratively with an in-school support worker employed by the local authority to find suitable placements for them in the locality, ensure they are kept safe and monitor their attendance and welfare.
- The school utilises a range of local authority provision, independent providers and private tutors to try to meet individual students' specific

needs. Regular meetings with key stakeholders and periodic visits by school staff and local authority personnel evaluate whether placements are appropriate and help to ensure that students engage with the staff at the provision. The school remains responsive to students' needs, making new arrangements if placements prove to be unsuitable or students are unable to meet the expectations of them.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all placements are sufficiently focused on students' learning. In Prospect House, most students benefit greatly from a daily programme of lessons including core subjects and vocational awards, and high-quality personal care, enabling them to reintegrate back into their mainstream school. At The County School and the local Youth Centre there are very few organised activities that promote students' learning. Students are cared for and supported well enough, but greater emphasis is placed on recreation and modifying their challenging behaviour rather than on promoting their academic achievement
- ensuring that all placements enable all students to acquire awards at the appropriate level in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. Without these qualifications, students are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment
- ensuring, as a matter of urgency, that all students who attend alternative provision are receiving a suitable full time education. Some providers are unable to provide students with a full timetable of learning and social activities throughout the week, leaving students to spend long periods of time at home and not fully engaged in learning. Senior leaders are not monitoring this well enough to make sure that any gaps in provision are filled and all students receive their full entitlement to learning. Currently some students, particularly those waiting to be referred to a new placement have a minimal amount of time allocated to their education.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector