

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



18 January 2013

Mrs S Hampton
Principal
Bluecoat Academy
Aspley Lane
Aspley
Nottingham
NG8 5GY

Dear Mrs Hampton

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 11 and 14 January 2013 to look at the academy's use of alternative provision. I am also very grateful to the members of the Nottingham City Secondary Education Partnership who gave up their time to come and talk to me about their partnership work.

During the visit I met with senior leaders at the academy who co-ordinate the alternative provision and with a group of students. I examined a range of documents and on-line information. I also met with the managers of the 'Nottingham City Secondary Education Partnership'. I then visited the following providers that your students attend: The Lighthouse Group (TLG) Nottingham, Football in the Community and REAL Education.

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 academy's work

- The academy's use of alternative provision is highly effective in helping students to remain in education throughout Key Stage 4 and to gain relevant qualifications and experience. In recent years, all students on alternative programmes progressed into further education, training, apprenticeships, or vocational areas that were related to their alternative provision courses.
- Information provided by the academy and interviews with students indicate that participation in alternative provision has improved their

attendance, behaviour and attitudes, and has enabled them to successfully re-engage with their education. Students interviewed were highly satisfied with their provision. They feel that it helps them to prepare for life by gaining useful qualifications and getting experience of work. Furthermore, they all appreciate that it has given them a second chance to succeed where they have experienced previous difficulties in school.

- Arrangements for alternative placements are made exclusively through a city-wide education partnership. The partnership offers a high level of service to local schools to help them to find the best suitable placements. Referrals are systematically scrutinised by the partnership, and joint responsibility is taken between the academy and the partnership for considering students' needs, allocating provision and closely monitoring the outcomes.
- The city-wide education partnership provides a wide range of alternative provision for its schools to commission. It ensures that all providers fully meet requirements for the safeguarding and the health and safety of students, and that the quality of provision can be assured and maintained throughout each placement.
- Individual timetables are constructed so that all students can receive their entitlement to English and mathematics either at the placement or back at the academy. As a result, all students continue their studies and the vast majority gain a relevant qualification in at least these two subjects.
- The quality of support provided by the academy and the partnership working together for students on alternative provision is excellent. An on-line system enables attendance and punctuality to be recorded as it happens, together with regular updates on academic and personal progress. This enables designated staff at the academy to follow up issues or concerns quickly. Academy staff are given specific roles to co-ordinate this work, and are keen to ensure that all students on alternative placements succeed and gain appropriate qualifications.
- The academy ensures that placements are successful and make a positive contribution to students' personal and academic development. Termly visits are made to check on routine matters and annual visits and formal observations ensure that the quality of provision at the placement is being maintained or developed. Students' achievements and progress are reported through half termly reviews. Written reports are prepared by the provider and are shared with academy staff, parents and carers.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that guidance is given to providers on how to make regular and accurate assessments in each subject so that the progress of students on alternative placements can be tracked in the same way as it is for other students in the year group.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector