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Mr A Smith  
Headteacher  
Priory School  
Mountfield Road  
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East Sussex  
BN7 2XN

Dear Mr Smith

**Ofsted 2012 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 28 and 29 January 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision.

During the visit I met with you and members of the leadership team. I met with students individually and in groups, and examined a range of documents and students' files. I also visited the following providers that your students attend:

- Avant Garde, Lewes
- Plumpton College, Plumpton campus
- College Central, Eastbourne.

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 works closely with a range of different providers including Plumpton College, Avant Garde and College Central, to ensure the personal and learning needs, interests and aspirations of each student are met. There are excellent procedures for selecting and commissioning suitable alternative provision.

- The school is supported very effectively by the local authority which provides a directory of alternative provision and advises the school on the commissioning of alternative placements.
- Priory School ensures that all providers meet requirements for the safeguarding, health and safety of students. Staff from the school visit each site to ensure that due consideration is given to students' safety and the suitability of accommodation and resources.
- Referral forms provided by the school and application forms, completed by students and their parents, ensure that providers are well informed about the individual needs of each student.
- Individual students are supported very well by the school's alternative provision co-ordinator and other staff who visit them in their placements. Students and providers say they can contact an identified person in the school with any issues and that school staff respond promptly to any enquiries.
- Off-site provision is timetabled so that students do not miss any key subjects. Consequently, students have a balanced curriculum that includes English and mathematics. Consequently, students reach appropriate standards in English and mathematics.
- All alternative provision in Key Stage 4 leads to some form of nationally recognised accreditation. There are clear pathways for students to follow and many elect to continue their chosen subjects to a higher level after Year 11.
- The school monitors and judges the effectiveness of the provision rigorously. This ensures that students make good progress on their various courses and attend regularly. Providers are required to contact the school immediately if a student is absent and give the school a written progress report at suitable intervals.
- Students value the alternative provision. They enjoy the opportunity to take responsibility and develop practical skills. Students say they are prepared well for their placements and the school is clear about how students should conduct themselves when working off-site.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- providing students with more detailed information about apprenticeships
- refining procedures for systematically recording the safeguarding checks and risk assessments that are conducted for each provider.

Yours sincerely

**Robert Ellis**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**