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Mrs M McMahon  
Headteacher  
Hodge Hill Sports and Enterprise College  
Bromford Road  
Hodge Hill  
Birmingham  
B36 8HB

Dear Mrs McMahon

### **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 6 and 7 February 2013 to look at the college's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with the deputy headteacher, the college's assistant headteacher and the associate headteacher from the North Area Network (NAN). I also met with a number of students and examined a range of documents. I visited the following providers that your students attend:

- Flexible Learning
- Collegiate Centre for Values Education
- Merlin Training
- South and City College, Birmingham

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 college's personalised curriculum at Key Stage 4 successfully meets the needs of most students. A small number of students who have struggled to succeed in mainstream education are being supported effectively in alternative provision on a full time basis.

- The commissioning of alternative providers is well managed through the North Area Network (NAN). Good use is made of the Birmingham Directory to identify potential providers. Careful attention is paid to identifying students' needs and interests and using this information to secure appropriate provision in consultation with students and their parents or carers.
- Although outcomes in 2012 in terms of formal accreditation were weak, it is clear that provision is successfully re-engaging several vulnerable students through maintaining their involvement in learning. By maintaining their engagement, students' future work-related options remain open.
- Tracking and monitoring of students' attendance and achievements are good. The providers themselves monitor students closely and with the support of NAN staff, follow up any issues promptly. Good communications with college ensure that a suitable focus on these students is sustained. The college maintains its involvement with students and tracks their progress carefully.
- Support for students from NAN mentors is highly effective. Students are universally positive about their mentors, appreciating that they have an advocate who visits them regularly and is a source of continuing support and encouragement.
- Suitable emphasis is placed on securing and improving English and mathematics skills at an appropriate level. Those students who are capable of good GCSE passes are supported to improve the grades gained in Year 10 at college.
- There are numerous examples of the positive impact that the alternative provision placements have on students' attitudes to learning. Several students commented that they regard alternative provision as a 'second chance' to access the training and qualifications that might enable them to progress into employment or further education.

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

- reporting to governors on those students placed in alternative provision as a discrete group
- monitoring the quality of teaching in alternative provision more closely.

Yours sincerely

**Judith Matharu**  
**Additional Inspector**