

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



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Mrs N Waters
Headteacher
Droitwich Spa High School
Briar Mill
Droitwich Spa
Worcestershire
WR9 0AA

Dear Mrs Waters

Ofsted 2013 14 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 20 and 21 June 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you, the deputy headteacher with responsibility for the curriculum, the data manager, the teacher in charge of alternative curriculum and the 'diverse curriculum' coordinators. I also met with the director of the local Aspire Consortium, which organises alternative provision through a partnership of schools in Droitwich, Worcester and Martley. I observed parts of lessons provided in school for students following the alternative curriculum, including a 'Ready, Steady Work' session and mathematics in the Inclusion Centre. I met with groups of students, and examined a range of documents and students' files. I also visited the following providers that your students attend:

- Movin' On, Worcester
- YDC: The Bridge, Hanley Swan
- Worcester College of Technology: Barbourne, Northbrook and Deansway sites.

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

- A broad range of courses is on offer, so that provision is well-tailored to suit students' capabilities, interests and/or career aspirations. Provision includes vocational areas such as hair, beauty, catering, construction, engineering, motor vehicle, and animal care.
- Training providers are selected from a list that is approved by the local authority and offer provision in good quality vocational settings.
- Quality assurance of the programmes is exceptionally thorough. Commissioning by the Aspire Consortium ensures that training providers meet quality and safety standards. Regular visits to the providers by the school's diverse curriculum coordinators and learning mentors enables any concerns from students or providers to be addressed quickly.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching in the off-site provision by the deputy heads of the consortium schools is an excellent means of ensuring that training is of at least a good quality and that students learn well. This monitoring sets high expectations for quality and there is clear evidence that providers make improvements as a result of the feedback they receive.
- Communications between the school and providers are very well-developed. Providers praise the frequency of visits from school or consortium staff, and say that they are readily available when necessary through telephone contact.
- The school and its providers are linked through the consortium by a highly effective computer system through which data on attendance, attitudes and achievement of students is updated very regularly and shared instantly. The progress of individual students is tracked very carefully, and progress reports are regular and detailed.
- Students have very positive views of the quality of their alternative provision. They praise the breadth and quality of opportunities available, and appreciate the wider skills which the courses develop, such as teamworking and travelling independently to their placements.
- The provision has a positive impact on outcomes for students. Students have high rates of success in their vocational programmes. Most students make progress into further education or training, with many following vocational pathways initiated in their alternative provision placements. The attendance and behaviour of the majority of students following the programmes in Year 10 has improved across the year.
- The overall achievement of those students following alternative provision is assuming increasing importance for the school alongside the broader objectives of engaging and enthusing students for education and training. Provision to ensure that students achieve core English and mathematics

qualifications has strengthened this year, with all now following GCSE programmes. Vocational courses are adapted to offer additional challenge to those more able to move to higher levels, and many courses offer Level 2 provision.

- The curriculum is planned effectively to ensure that students following alternative provision do not miss core lessons in English, mathematics or science, and to enable those with special educational needs to receive additional support through the Inclusion Centre.
- The strategic leadership of alternative provision ensures that it has a high priority in the school's curriculum planning. The school and its consortium partners have received approval for the creation of a local free school which would provide a curriculum structured around alternative provision for identified students.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- systematically analysing the performance of whole groups of students following alternative provision to ensure that courses have a generally positive impact
- sharing data showing the impact of alternative provision with governors to inform their decisions about value for money, including the way in which they spend the pupil premium
- systematically supplementing the detailed information already given to providers about students with the strategies for teaching and learning outlined in students' individual education plans.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hodgkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector