

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 W Whelan
Principal
Derby Moor Community Sports College
Moorway Lane
Littleover
Derby
DE23 2FS

Dear Mrs Whelan

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 19 and 20 June 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with several members of your staff, talked to students, examined a range of documents and met with two members of staff from Junction 16 alternative provision. I also visited the following providers that your students attend:

- Derby Pride Academy
- The Strand Hair and Beauty Training School.

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

- You and your senior team demonstrate a strong commitment to effective alternative provision and believe in its value in raising achievement and re-engaging students who are struggling to cope with mainstream school. This commitment has led to the school forming a partnership with Derby County F.C. to open Derby Pride Academy (DPA), a free school for alternative provision. Consequently, much of the external provision used by the school centres on the use of DPA, together with a small amount of part-time, vocational provision sourced elsewhere.

- It is a significant strength of provision that staff work across both the school and the academy, applying the same protocols and procedures in their work, ensuring clarity and consistency in approaches.
- The consistency of expectations is evident across the two settings. This includes a willingness to work with students in different ways when required and maintaining a consistent focus on meeting individual needs, raising achievement, promoting engagement and supporting students in their personal and social development.
- Importantly, strong emphasis is placed on making sure that alternative provision enables students to achieve formal qualifications, with a particular emphasis on GCSE English and mathematics together with a range of vocational accreditations that support progression post-16.
- Excellent assessment, tracking and monitoring procedures are in place, for tracking both academic and pastoral progress of students in alternative provision. It is early days but already the monitoring shows evidence of some real gains in progress for a significant number of students who are now on track to achieve credible English and mathematics GCSE grades, some exceeding their targets.
- There are several notable successes where students have turned themselves around through alternative provision and are now firmly re-engaged with their learning. Students interviewed provided several inspiring accounts of how their work at DPA has already changed their attitudes to school and prompted significant improvements in attainment and progress. Several students were able to identify, with maturity, how effectively they have been supported to make these changes.
- A calm, purposeful atmosphere that was conducive to good learning was evident in the sessions observed at both DPA and an external provider of a part-time vocational course. The quality of learning observed in both settings was consistently high, with good relationships evident, a focus on quality dialogue with students, resulting in some impressive outcomes in terms of the work produced.
- The quality of reporting back to Derby Moor and other commissioning schools from DPA is particularly good. Detailed reports give a clear indication of students' attainment and progress; this is particularly important for 'turnaround' students, who are re-integrated into mainstream schools following alternative provision.
- Listening to students' views and encouraging them to shape provision, for example in terms of lesson length and in the development of the rewards system in DPA, has enabled students to take responsibility. Consequently, students identify well with the provision and express pride in their successes.

- Much imaginative preventative work is underway at Key Stage 3 to support students who are at risk and to promote their inclusion. For example, the use of creative therapy, individual support for students with autism and other tailored packages is helping those at risk of exclusion to remain in mainstream education as far as possible. The school's excellent pastoral care and support system provides detailed knowledge of students; this combined with the commitment evident to meet individual needs flexibly is having good impact in keeping potentially vulnerable students suitably engaged in school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- monitoring the quality of learning robustly for those students who are placed on part-time alternative provision in various settings in line with the rigorous monitoring and evaluation evident within the school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu
Additional Inspector