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Mrs J Abbott
Principal
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Dear Mrs Abbott

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 – 20 September 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met senior staff and staff who coordinate and monitor the provision. I examined documents including detailed case studies of previous and current students. I also visited the following providers that your students attend: Southampton Football Club, Access to Education (Medical) and North West Surrey Short Stay 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

- The high priority given to this area of the school's work is reflected in the seniority of the staff who commission, monitor and evaluate provision and also in the specific appointment of staff to coordinate provision and support students.
- Students at risk of disengagement and disaffection are identified as early as possible and supported to keep them 'on track'. There are a number of successful intervention activities such as transition groups for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils. This means that there are only a very few students with particular needs or talents who access alternative off-site provision.
- The school maintains valuable partnerships and meets regularly with colleagues from other schools, the local authority and the health service

including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Information about students and about current and potential providers is shared and new providers carefully chosen and checked to make sure that what they have to offer is safe and meets students' specific needs.

- It is evident from the documentation, and from the students themselves, that students value and benefit from the school's mentor system. Mentors provide regular links between the students, providers and school and help to make sure that the placements are as successful as possible.
- The school maintains regular communication, both formal and informal, with students and off-site providers. The providers are well informed about the individual needs of each student through detailed referral forms and they, in turn, keep the school informed about the students' attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- The school works carefully with providers to make sure that all students achieve qualifications, particularly in English and mathematics, and is keen to ensure that there are clear pathways for the student's next steps in education or employment. Except where there were serious medical difficulties, all of last year's students successfully achieved a range of qualifications, including in English and mathematics. All of this group have continued their education and/or training.
- Where off-site provision is for one day, the school provides additional support and catch up sessions. In specific cases, such as when students have medical needs or attend providers such as Southampton Football club, the school's teachers provide work and students complete it under the guidance of teachers at the off-site provider. Subject teachers are in close communication with the providers and students to ensure that the work is appropriate and completed correctly.
- Pupils value the alternative provision highly. Where students have particular talents, the school, student and the provider cooperate very well to make sure that students also achieve academically. Where attendance, behaviour and attitudes towards learning are problematic, these improve both in the off-site providers and also in the school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- increasing the frequency of formal reviews of students' progress with off-site providers, particularly when there are concerns
- making sure that when the school provides additional tutor sessions based in the off-site provision, attendance at these sessions is also monitored and absences responded to quickly.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector