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8 October 2013

Mr G Lloyd  
Principal  
Tuxford Academy  
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Dear Mr Lloyd

**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 2 and 3 October 2013 to look at the academy's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with senior leaders at the academy who are involved in the co-ordination of alternative provision and with two groups of students who attend alternative providers. I examined a range of documents and published materials. I also visited the following providers that your students attend: Ashvale Youth Engagement Community Centre and The Dukeries Academy.

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 academy's use of alternative provision is highly effective in helping students to remain in education throughout Key Stage 4 and gain relevant qualifications and experience. It is fully integrated into the overall curriculum so that the diverse academic and personal needs of all students can be met.

- This provision is given a high profile within the academy's curriculum planning. It is very well co-ordinated by a team of senior leaders within the academy who know the students well.
- The highly personalised and flexible curriculum at the academy means that most requirements of students can be catered for on-site. This means that alternative placements are rare and only used to address specific needs, such as school phobia or anger management, or to allow students to study highly specialised subjects such as construction.
- Placements are carefully chosen to match the high aspirations, high levels of engagement and high expectations that are found throughout the academy. As a result, students get the very best out of their placements, and the placements get the very best out of each student.
- Placement staff are regarded very much a part of the academy 'family'. They have full access to the support and resources that they need to ensure that students are safe, attend well and achieve. Training and other professional development opportunities are open to all.
- Individual timetables are constructed so that students can receive their full entitlement to English and mathematics either at the placement or back at school. As a result, all students can continue their studies and gain a relevant qualification in these two subjects and at least three more.
- There is careful attention paid by all staff to meet the literacy needs of all students. Key words, word walls, writing frames, tailored support and careful and detailed marking and feedback all contribute strongly.
- The quality of support provided for students on alternative provision is excellent. An e-mail system enables attendance and punctuality to be recorded daily, together with regular updates on academic and personal progress. This enables designated staff at the academy to follow up issues or concerns quickly. Academy staff visit regularly and support is enhanced through the services of other agencies when appropriate.
- Information, advice and guidance are a strong feature throughout the placements. Students are prepared well for the next stage of their education. In recent years, virtually all students on alternative programmes made progress into further education, training or apprenticeships.
- Students on alternative provision are very happy, engaged and enthusiastic about their placements. They appreciate the commitment and hard work given by their tutors and are keen not to let them down. Their success breeds optimism and confidence for the future. Comments such as 'it's changed me altogether' and 'they give me self-respect that I didn't have before' exemplify this.

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

- consulting on and collating ideas for the future development of alternative provision into a strategic plan
- reviewing further options for work-based learning opportunities that could lead to a greater number of apprenticeships.

Yours sincerely

**Trevor Riddiough**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**