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24 October 2013

Mrs A Bagley  
Headteacher  
The Linden Education Centre  
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Dear Mrs Bagley

### **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 9 and 10 October to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with the personal development and inclusion manager who coordinates the alternative provision, examined a range of documents and met with some students. I also visited the following providers that your students attend: Explore Activity Centre, Skillways Vocational Workshops, Maximus Gym and Martial Arts Centre, and Releasing Potential.

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 centre has used its local connections very effectively to set up a broad range of off-site provision in a relatively short period of time.
- Off-site provision is carefully selected to meet students' individual needs and interests. Students are prepared well for their placements through prior meetings with staff and by making visits.
- Staff who work in the off-site provision are appropriately qualified in their particular fields and establish good relationships with students. As a result students enjoy attending and are proud of their achievements. They

particularly appreciate how some of the activities have improved their self-confidence. In the words of one, 'It has helped me to push myself and to give things a go.'

- Providers report that they have good communication with the school and that any problems that might arise are resolved quickly. They give regular feedback on students' progress, often verbally.
- The use of off-site provision is timetabled to make sure that all students are provided with a balanced curriculum which leads to a broad range of suitable qualifications, including GCSE in both English and mathematics. Approximately two thirds of Year 11 students who attended off-site provision last year gained GCSE passes in English and mathematics, with the remainder gaining qualifications in the functional skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Evidence from the school shows that as a result of attending off-site provision, several students have improved their attitude to learning. Almost all students who left in 2012 progressed to future training, study or employment, linked to the work-related qualifications and improved personal skills they gained through attending off-site provision.

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

- setting targets for students' personal development, which could be used to measure students' progress and to help evaluate the effectiveness of off-site provision
- making sure that all off-site providers get sufficient information about students' individual needs and abilities prior to attendance
- pulling together into one comprehensive record the various checks on the health and safety and the suitability of accommodation of off-site providers
- monitoring the quality of learning at off-site provision more formally through written reports.

Yours sincerely

**Andrew Redpath**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**