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Ms M Szyndler and Mr A Scott  
Acting Headteachers  
Coundon Court  
Northbrook Road  
Coventry  
CV6 2AJ

Dear Ms Szyndler and Mr Scott

### **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 6 and 7 November 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you, two assistant headteachers, the work-related learning coordinator, students who attend alternative provision and a parent and carer. I examined a range of documents including students' progress records. I visited the following off-site providers that your students attend: Coventry Building Workshops and Coombe Country Park. I also observed part of the health and beauty course provided on-site for your students and those who attend local schools.

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**

- Alternative provision is used judiciously for a small number of students. The academy is a large institution with a high level of knowledge about individual students' needs, interests and aspirations. Case studies provided showed that off-site provision is used well alongside other initiatives to re-engage students. Other effective strategies used include a six-week 'preventative placement' in a local school, managed through strong collaboration between local providers of secondary education. For some students, different approaches combine to bring about students'

inclusion and contribute to the very small proportion of students not in education, employment or training post-16.

- The quality of off-site provision is secured by effective work by the local authority on behalf of local schools and academies, as part of service-level agreements. These ensure that expectations are clear and safeguarding requirements are met. Introductory leaflets provide helpful information, advice and guidance for school staff, students, parents and carers before placements start. Visits, observations and evaluations of teaching off-site by the local authority are regular. An annual analysis that involves school managers, providers, students, parents and carers provides an excellent basis for continuous improvement.
- Students are confident about the impact of alternative provision on developing positive attitudes to learning and employment. Those interviewed were able to refer to data that tracked improvements in their attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes. This is reflected in the views of parents and carers, who are closely involved in the process of setting up and settling into alternative provision. Although at an early stage of development, the records of achievement maintained by all students at the school provide an additional opportunity for them to share and build on achievements off-site. A high-profile annual event for students who have succeeded through alternative provision locally adds to their sense of achievement.
- Students receive regular feedback about their progress, facilitated by the accreditation of all off-site provision. However, parents and carers do not routinely receive feedback as part of the whole school reporting system. There are suitable opportunities provided for students to catch up, particularly in English and mathematics, should their work off-site coincide with lessons in those subjects. Most students taking an alternative curriculum succeed in English and mathematics examinations as a result. Additional support in class, or sessions after school are valued by the students. Where alternative provision has the widest impact the links between off-site and school-based experiences are explicit. For example, a student working at Coombe Country Park was able to take a lead in the learning of other students in his geography GCSE group who visited as part of their fieldwork. This embedded his learning and contributed to his positive approach to the subject in school.

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

- sharing the school's system of monitoring students' behaviour and attitudes to learning with alternative providers off-site so that they are able to contribute to it
- complementing the regular off-site visits by the local authority with additional visits by students' mentors at the school, to ensure that no opportunities to develop and apply learning in either setting are missed.

Yours sincerely

**Ian Middleton**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**