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Mr C Orr
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Dear Mr Orr

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 13 and 14 January 2014 to look at the school'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 Loughborough Inclusion Partnership and Mountfields Youth Centre, two of the providers that your students attend. I saw a teaching session at Mountfields Youth Centre, and part of an English lesson at the 'alternative learning programme' at the 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

- Alternative provision is used for a small number of students. The academy is a large organisation with a highly personalised and flexible curriculum. This means that most requirements of students can be catered for on-site. Therefore, alternative placements are rare and only used to address specific needs, such as school phobia, particularly challenging behaviour, a need to increase students' self-belief, or to allow students to study highly specialised subjects such as motor vehicle maintenance.

- Alternative provision at this academy takes the form of an on-site programme known as the 'alternative learning programme' (ALP). ALP caters for around ten students who are at risk of exclusion or who come from permanent exclusion. These students follow a personalised learning programme leading to a minimum of five GCSEs or equivalents including English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Students on this programme may attend external providers for one day each week to follow vocational courses leading to Level 1 qualifications, or attend work experience. A further eight students who are not part of the ALP programme attend a youth centre to undertake courses to support their social development.
- The provision for a small number of students is organised by the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership. Here, they study GCSE English and mathematics and a range of personalised programmes designed to support their own social development and employability skills.
- The Loughborough Inclusion Partnership is a partnership of nine secondary schools in the local area. It provides specialist provision across the area. This arrangement ensures that students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, who are at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded, can gain the personal skills, self-confidence and qualifications required to be successful beyond school.
- The Loughborough Inclusion Partnership arrangement is an effective way of co-ordinating the placements on offer and extending the available support from a wide range of agencies for the benefit of the students. It pools and utilises the resources within the schools so that specialist help, agency support, relevant placements and courses can be offered area-wide.
- The Loughborough Inclusion Partnership is well managed and its services are greatly appreciated by both the partner schools and their students. A core group of practitioners meets fortnightly and a partnership group of representatives from all the partner schools and organisations meets half-termly to oversee the nature and quality of provision. The partnership's work is guided by an ambitious strategic plan agreed with all the partner schools.
- The academy's use of the alternative provision identified above is highly effective in helping students to remain in education throughout Key Stage 4 and gain self-confidence and relevant qualifications. It is fully integrated into the overall curriculum so that the particular personal needs of the students can be met.
- The off-site providers are secured through two local partnerships: one, an area-wide business consortium, the other the inclusion partnership. These offer a high level of service to local schools to help them to find the appropriate placements and ensure that safeguarding requirements are

met. Joint responsibility is taken between the academy and the partnerships for monitoring the quality of provision and the outcomes.

- Good communication between the academy and the providers ensure that external staff understand the needs of the students and are able to meet their needs and resolve any problems that occur quickly.
- Students appreciate the value of their off-site provision and feel better prepared for the next stage in their lives. In many cases, students are thankful that it has given them a second chance get on track and complete their education. All courses lead to accreditation. All students go onto further education, employment or training. Some gain apprenticeships.
- While no students on last year's programme gained a grade C or above in English or mathematics, all gained a grade D to G in these subjects. In most cases, this represents good progress, given their starting points on entry to the programme.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- tracking students' personal, social development more closely, and sharing this information with parents as part of the academy's reporting process
- tracking and monitoring the attendance of students following alternative provision, ensuring that providers log the attendances as well as the absences daily
- monitoring the quality of learning at off-site provision more formally through direct observation
- pursuing the ideas for the future development of alternative provision within a strategic plan.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector