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Mr M Gosling  
Principal  
Trinity Academy Halifax  
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Dear Mr Gosling

**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 29 and 30 April 2014 to look at the academy's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you, the Vice Principals with responsibility for student support and the curriculum, the Assistant Principal (student support), the director of inclusion, a pastoral manager and the educational welfare officer. I also met students and visited the following providers that your students attend: Compass Bridge and the Mixenden Activity Centre.

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 academy's work**

- The academy has a clear rationale, set out in its policy, for the use of alternative provision. It endeavours to ensure that its curriculum design and pastoral systems provide successfully for almost all students so that only very small numbers receive some of their education elsewhere.
- The academy's approach to commissioning is flexible and reflects the varying types of off-site provision used. The academy does not duplicate checks and systems which are already in place at a provision run by the local authority. However, where a service level agreement is required, this is in place and covers all essential elements. Providers are clear about

what the academy expects of them, for instance with regard to records of students' activities and their attendance. Critical areas such as health and safety, safeguarding and students' special educational needs are covered effectively when setting up placements.

- The academy uses providers with whom it has well-established relationships. These are run either by the local authority or were approved by the local authority in the past. The experiences and views of local schools which form the Behaviour and Attendance Collaborative are taken into account in considering off-site options.
- Provision is carefully selected to meet students' personal development needs. Since the academy remains accountable for students' academic outcomes, senior leaders are keen that, as far as possible, core subjects are delivered by academy staff. A system of one-to-one tutoring is in place to deliver English, mathematics and, in some instances, science to these students on the days that they attend the academy. Where appropriate for individuals, students join their own year groups in mainstream lessons.
- The off-site provision chosen provides students with a range of opportunities for activities that expand their horizons. Specialist facilities and equipment such as mountain bikes, climbing walls, canoes and go-karts help them learn new skills in suitable, safe environments and supported by staff with expertise in these areas.
- When initiating a placement, the academy shares an appropriate range of information about students' needs in a format preferred by the provider. On this basis, goals are set which focus on the areas which students find most difficult, usually aspects of their behaviour and attendance.
- Communication between the academy and off-site providers is good. Providers can readily contact the key worker for each student and confidently expect a prompt response.
- The academy dedicates considerable resources to ensuring that students attending off-site alternative provision have the opportunity to gain qualifications in English and mathematics. Of the two Year 11 students who left in 2013, one gained five GCSEs including a grade C in English. The other gained Level 1 qualifications in functional English and mathematics.
- This year there are also two Year 11 students who have been attending off-site alternative provision. Their target grades for English and mathematics are Cs and Ds and there is some prospect that they will realise these. They are also expected to gain passes in BTEC science. The academy's records show that progress accelerated considerably for these students once they began attending alternative off-site provision.
- The much improved academic progress made by these students is helped considerably by the very significant increases in their attendance: a rise

from 78% to 94% is typical. Marked improvements in their social and employability skills, as well as expert support from alternative provision staff, has helped students develop their ambitions. In 2013 the students who left progressed to the local college or a local project. The current Year 11 students are clear about their future direction and expect to move on to the local college in the first instance.

- The academy evaluates the impact of off-site alternative provision by tracking the impact of this on students' personal development, their engagement with learning and their academic progress. The quality of provision is monitored through regular visits by key workers who review students' work as well as their attendance and behaviour. They check that providers are setting appropriate boundaries for students.
- The students spoken to enjoy the opportunity to learn outside a normal school environment. As a result, they attend much more regularly than was previously the case at school. They recognise that their behaviour has improved and that when they are in the academy they apply themselves more effectively to learning. Several students could articulate the difference attending alternative provision has made to their self-confidence and social skills. The experience has helped them decide what they would like to do post-16 and motivated them, in varying degrees, to work towards this.

Yours sincerely

**Jane Austin**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**