

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs J Turner
Principal
Uppingham Community College
London Road
Uppingham
Rutland
LE15 9TJ

Dear Mrs Turner

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 14 and 15 May 2014 to look at the college's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you and a number of your senior colleagues with responsibility for alternative provision. I met with eight students and examined a range of documents. I also visited Engage and New College, Stamford, two of the following providers that your students attend.

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

- A small number of students are currently engaged in alternative provision. This is used to provide vocational options for some students as an alternative to a full academic curriculum and to successfully re-engage a very small number of students who are seriously alienated from college to retain their involvement in learning.
- Through careful curriculum planning, a broad and balanced curriculum remains in place for all students. This ensures that any off-site provision fits very well with the core curriculum at college. Most importantly, this enables students to continue with GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science and design technology and retain a strong connection and identification with the college.

- The emphasis placed on securing qualifications in English and mathematics has been successful. Last year, a considerable proportion of students attending off-site provision gained a grade C or above in mathematics and although fewer gained a C or above in English, overall, the majority of students made expected progress.
- You provide clear information and guidance for students and their parents and carers to guide decisions about curriculum choices at Key Stage 4. The care and support provided for individual students is exemplary. Students are well-known to staff and every effort is made to secure appropriate provision that meets their needs and aspirations. You and your staff demonstrate a discernable commitment to persevere and provide a bespoke curriculum to meet individual needs, in the face of challenging circumstances or significant barriers to learning.
- Importantly, suitable emphasis is placed on securing provision that provides accredited pathways in order to support progression post-16. Information about students' destinations indicates that, for a significant number of potentially vulnerable students, there is a strong correlation between alternative and vocational provision and students' destinations post-16.
- There is excellent supervision of students on vocational courses. The presence of your staff at the FE College ensures that students are very well supported through careful monitoring of their work and progress. The routine follow-up of work in college ensures continuity and emphasises the significance of the work to students.
- Your careful tracking and monitoring of students' progress and achievements clearly identifies the positive impact of alternative provision in developing personal skills, gains in confidence and self-esteem, reducing incidents in college and motivating young people to continue learning.
- Students are positive about their experiences. They speak confidently about the skills they are developing and the influence their involvement has on future pathways after college. Notably, all three students on the 'Engage' programme have secured post-16 courses for next year.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that all providers are provided with written information regarding the college's expectations of safeguarding and that governors take account of off-site provision when reviewing safeguarding procedures.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu
Additional Inspector