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Mr C Wakefield  
Principal  
Bexleyheath Academy  
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Dear Mr Wakefield

**Ofsted 2014 15 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 January 2015 to look at the academy's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you, the director of progression, several other senior leaders and the managers of the off-site provision. I also met students and visited the following providers that your students attend: Construct and the Links Hair Academy which is part of Skills for Growth.

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 academy selects alternative provision carefully to ensure that it meets the academic and personal needs of students. It uses only two providers, focusing on opportunities for students to follow work-related courses and on receiving value for money.
- The academy timetable is organised effectively so that students choose to attend alternative provision alongside other optional courses. This ensures that all students follow a balanced curriculum which leads to a broad range of qualifications. Students are prepared well for making their

choices through 'open evenings', attending pre-course interviews and by visiting the off-site provision with their parents.

- The school provides some good opportunities for skills learned at the off-site provision to be developed further in school. For example, the annual 'Hair Show' held in school enables students on the hairdressing course to demonstrate their skills alongside apprentices from the local area.
- The accommodation at the off-site provision offers a safe environment where students gain a good understanding of the work place. Staff are suitably trained and set high expectations for students. They send the school regular reports on students' attendance, personal skills and academic achievement.
- Providers feel well supported by the academy. Staff at the academy and at the off-site provision work together effectively to safeguard students. However, procedures for sharing information and alerting the academy of any safeguarding concerns that might arise are not set out formally in writing.
- Almost all students who left school at the end of 2014 who had used alternative educational provision gained five GCSE passes, with a few gaining passes at grade C or above. All gained a GCSE pass in English and about three quarters gained a pass in mathematics. The academy's information shows that the large majority of students made expected or better progress since attending alternative provision. Results for the work-related courses provided off-site were particularly high, with several students gaining a distinction. Evidence suggests a similarly positive picture for the current cohort of students.
- The academy has a good system for tracking the personal and social development of students. Information shows that most students make improvements in their attitudes to learning, independence and attendance since starting at off-site provision. The academy is considering how the acquisition of these skills can be recognised formally and linked more clearly to students' employability and career aspirations.
- The courses studied provide a clear pathway to further training or work. Almost all students who left at the end of Year 11 in 2014 have taken up apprenticeships or pursued further training linked to their off-site course. Some students who attend currently and have successfully completed work experience placements in local hairdressing salons are proud that they have already secured apprenticeships for when they leave school.
- The academy collects a good range of information to evaluate the overall impact of alternative provision on the achievement of students. The director of progression completes an annual report showing students' attendance, examination results and destinations when they leave. Staff visit off-site provision at least once each term and make a general check

on the quality of learning. There are also frequent informal discussions around the progress of individual students. Formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning regularly throughout the year is less well-established.

- Students are very positive about their experience at the off-site provision. They enjoy learning through practical work and appreciate how this provides variety in their experience of school. As one commented 'It's a good change during the week.' Others mentioned how they liked the experience of 'being at work' and how 'you get treated like an adult.' Several felt that they had improved their overall attitude to school since attending the off-site provision.

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

- establishing more formal arrangements for sharing information with providers and giving them written copies of the academy's safeguarding procedures
- monitoring more systematically the quality of teaching and learning at off-site provision
- implementing plans to recognise formally improvements in students' personal and employability skills.

Yours sincerely

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