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Ms A Davies  
Headteacher  
Avon Valley School and Performing  
Arts College  
Newbold Road  
Rugby  
CV21 1EH

Dear Ms Davies

**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 20-21 January 2015 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you and an assistant headteacher. I also met students and visited the following providers that your students attend:

Warwickshire College  
Strachan Football Foundation  
Heart of England Training Group  
Positive about Young People  
90-ONE Education, based at Coventry Motor Museum

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**

- You successfully use a wide range of alternative provision for different purposes. For some students, the option of pursuing vocational studies outside of the school environment is a strong motivator; other placements support students who are struggling to cope with conventional school and are at risk of disaffection or exclusion due to challenging behaviour. This has resulted in a diverse range of provision, with the aim of retaining

students' interest and commitment to learning and providing suitable support to overcome some complex barriers to learning for vulnerable students. Overall, this approach is successful.

- The vast majority of students remain part of the school, successfully combining alternative provision with a school timetable. This enables a suitable focus on gaining GCSE grades in English and mathematics for those students who are capable of achieving these.
- Considerable efforts are made to meet students' individual needs and aspirations and source placements that are well suited to their interests and preferences. Close liaison with parents and carers ensures that they are committed to the provision. Should a placement prove unsuitable, you make every effort to find another, demonstrating persistence with students whose needs can be challenging to meet.
  
- Positive relationships have been established with a wide range of providers. Provision is well organised and managed effectively. Providers are mostly highly positive about the good communication evident between both parties. In particular, providers are clear about your expectations of them to monitor closely students' attendance, safety and achievements. All provide regular updates about these aspects with the school taking prompt action if any concerns emerge. In particular, reports on students' progress and achievements are detailed and informative.
  
- Alternative provision played a significant part in re-engaging the 34 Year 11 students on placements who left in 2014. Although many of these were at risk of leaving without a clear post-16 pathway, all of these students progressed into education, employment or training. Of these students, six gained a GCSE grade C or above in English and mathematics and 16 gained a grade D to G in these subjects. Others gained a variety of functional skills qualifications. Given students' starting points on entry to their programmes, this represents good progress overall. A similar, if slightly improved picture is evident for this year's students, where those Year 11 students on alternative provision are expected to achieve similarly good progress in the two core subjects at GCSE.
  
- The school's evidence indicates that alternative provision is enabling a number of young people who are at serious risk of alienation or exclusion from school to re-engage in their learning. For some, there have been notable gains with improvements made in behaviour, attitudes to school and significant gains evident in their learning.
  
- Students speak highly of their placements with many recognising the motivational effect upon their learning. They appreciate the varied opportunities provided to work in a work-related setting and pursue activities that they find more interesting than their traditional school curriculum subjects. A large proportion of those interviewed indicated that they are considering pursuing further training post-16 in fields related to their alternative placements.

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

- ensuring that all providers receive detailed information on students at the time of referral
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning at alternative provision with similar rigour to that applied to the mainstream provision at school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu  
**Additional Inspector**