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Ms L Garner  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Garner

Ofsted survey inspection programme – pupil referral units (PRUs)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit with Nada Trikic on 12 December 2006 to look at aspects of the PRU's work.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes and in particular on how well the pupils achieve.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and students, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of students' work and observation of two part lessons.

On the basis of what we observed during this inspection the effectiveness of the PRU's overall contribution to the five ECM outcomes was judged to be outstanding.

#### Achievement and standards

- The majority of students achieve well in relation to their starting points because they attend the centre, although standards are below average. In 2006, fewer pupils achieved national qualifications than 2005. Sixty percent achieved a recognised accredited qualification: 40% achieved one pass at GCSE; 25% achieved three or more passes. Sixty-five percent gained the St David's Award.
- At the end of Year 11 in 2006, 65% went on to further education, training or appropriate employment; 20% continue to seek employment.

- The centre is focused on achievement in its widest sense from the first moment students step foot over its threshold. Students commit to this because work is accurately tailored to their specific and individual needs.
- The centre has rationalised and consolidated the use of awards. The core entitlement is English, mathematics, science, PE and art.
- The focus on key skills through the St David's Award equips students well for life and the world of work. This is an outstanding feature of the centre. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is measured comprehensively by staff and shared with students and staff to further increase rates of progress.

### Personal development

- The centre is passionate about ensuring open and effective dialogue and this leads to excellent relationships between adults and students.
- The strong teamwork coupled with a shared vision and determination creates a safe, secure and caring environment.
- The attendance of most students improves significantly as a result of being placed at the centre
- Students behave very well. The clear boundaries, guidelines and expectations are consistently applied. Most students respond well to these.
- The Young Enterprise initiative 'Devine Designs' is an outstanding example of preparing young adults for the world of work and taking responsibility.
- Appropriate opportunities are provided to develop learning offsite. For example, this includes the Alternative Learning Programme (ALPS) and Bermondsey Outdoor Services (BODS) which students particularly enjoy.
- The effective mentorship programme and recently introduced counselling service have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, learning and behaviour.

### Quality of provision (teaching and learning; curriculum; care, guidance and support)

- The centre has a positive and affirming learning environment.
- Teachers plan well and deliver interesting and challenging activities which extend pupils' thinking and learning well.
- Staff know the students extremely well and they shape the learning experiences to meet their individualised learning needs carefully. This is true personalised learning.
- The innovative St David's Award is an entitlement for all and equips students with skills for life around relevant and appropriate themes. The opportunity to work with employers in order to describe the St David's Award will increase their understanding of this exciting programme and share its relevance for the work place.
- Detailed and precise feedback clearly identifies strengths and areas for development for students. These are used effectively by staff to plan future programmes of work.

- The centre has a comprehensive range of assessments which are used by all staff and students outstandingly well to review and evaluate the wide range of achievements.

### Leadership and management

- The Acting Headteacher provides outstandingly passionate leadership. She is well supported by her committed, hard working and forward thinking team.
- A range of new initiatives has been recently implemented arising from a comprehensive self review and evaluation. Although many are at the early stages of development, for example the baseline assessment, outcomes are already being measured formally and informally.
- The management committee oversees the work of the centre competently but needs to increase its first hand understanding of the work of the centre.
- A wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) is provided for all staff at the centre. However, opportunities to work with other high schools and PRUs on areas of shared or common needs .

### Inclusion

- St David's is a highly inclusive service which meets the individual needs of students with emotional, behaviour and medical difficulties.
- The quality of relationships and secure, caring environment helps every student to grow in confidence. This is a strength of the centre. This is supported by exemplary multi-agency work which enables students to achieve well by unlocking their potential to take control of their lives.
- Very good partnerships with parents have been established. Consequently their understanding is increased enabling them to support their children more effectively.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- work with employers to describe the St David's Award and increase their understanding of this exciting programme and share its relevance for the work place
- increase the understanding and involvement of the management committee by experiencing the work of the centre first hand
- provide increased opportunities for the centre to work with other high schools and PRUs on projects or areas of common professional development needs, where appropriate.

We hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work of St David's.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection. Thank you for your help and support throughout the visit.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
Her Majesty's Inspector