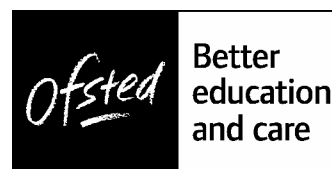


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Mrs R Harris-Cooksley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Harris-Cooksley

Ofsted survey inspection programme – pupil referral units (PRUs)

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 29 November 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 lessons, plus a breakfast session.

On the basis of what I 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

Although many students are achieving at below expected levels when they are admitted to the centre, they make good progress and are able to gain accreditation at GCSE, often better than had been predicted by their previous schools.

The achievement of students in GCSE and other accreditation has steadily improved over the past three years. An increasing number of students are now gaining GCSE at the B – D grades.

Personal development

The students' personal development is an outstanding feature of the centre. There is a significant contribution to the outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM). This is partly due to a very strong programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). It is also due, in part, to a very detailed analysis by the headteacher of how the total curriculum, including both the formal and the informal curriculum, can be linked to and contribute to the outcomes of ECM. This analysis is of high quality and could usefully be shared with other centres.

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

The quality of teaching was very good in both the lessons observed. The lessons were planned very well, making effective use of careful assessment of the students' previous learning. The effective use of part-time staff enables the centre to provide specialist teaching in a range of subjects.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the identified needs of the students. While some aspects of the curriculum are slightly limited by the available accommodation, the accommodation is used effectively. The curriculum includes work related learning and work experience. The planned development of the centre from September 2007 will offer the potential for an even wider curriculum, including additional vocational courses. The PSHE programme provides very good opportunities for personal development. There are very good opportunities for the students to gain a range of accredited qualifications, including GCSE, as well as NVQs through attendance at college as part of their programme.

There is very good care, guidance and support, which is recognised and valued by the students. This is seen as an important contribution to the outcomes of ECM.

Leadership and management

There is outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher. There is effective support by other staff with responsibilities. The focus of the work of the centre is upon improving standards, raising the achievement of students and contributing strongly to the outcomes of ECM. The deployment of staff reflects this focus. There are very clear structures and responsibilities for the running of the centre, which contribute to the effectiveness of the work of the centre. The staff share and implement the vision for the role and purpose of the centre. There are effective arrangements for ongoing professional development of staff and for support, monitoring and evaluation of the work of the centre. These are also supported and supplemented by the local authority. There is active involvement by local headteachers through the management committee for the centre.

Inclusion

The centre has good links with mainstream schools. These have contributed to the successful re-integration of students into mainstream schools, including some students in Year 10. There is a successful and effective outreach programme to support students and schools and this has contributed to a reduction in the number of exclusions from mainstream schools. The centre would like to provide a part-time programme of attendance at the centre for some students at risk of exclusion. At present, this is limited by the accommodation available, but this should be possible when the role and accommodation of the centre is extended under the local authority's planned development from September 2007.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to build upon the existing outstanding practice, as the new arrangements are implemented, to widen the curriculum and the opportunities for accreditation; and
- to develop further the arrangements for gathering and analysing data on outcomes, including the destinations of leavers, to give a longer term picture of the outcomes and the possible implications for future programmes in the centre.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the work of the centre.

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.

Yours sincerely

David A Gardiner
Additional Inspector