

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@Ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr I Wright
Headteacher
Bank View High School
Sherwoods Lane
Liverpool
L10 1LW

Dear Mr Wright

Ofsted survey inspection programme: the extent and quality of provision for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 06 November 2008 to look at the work of your school in relation to the extent and quality of provision for pupils from day 6 of exclusion. I would be grateful if you would also give my thanks to the young person and her mother to whom I spoke.

During my visit I gathered evidence from discussions with you, your deputy and members of staff and from scrutiny of documents. I talked with a pupil who had been excluded for more than five days prior to September 2007 and with her mother. My judgements are related to the arrangements and outcomes for pupils whose exclusions mean that you have to provide education for them from day 6.

You told me that you have excluded only one pupil for a fixed term longer than five days since September 2007. At the time of my visit, no pupils were currently experiencing day 6 provision and so I was unable to see this at first hand. My visit concentrated, therefore, on the arrangements that have been made for day 6 in the future, discussion of lessons learned from the single exclusion of more than five days that has happened so far and measures taken by the school to lessen the need for exclusion.

The initial arrangements made by the school for day 6 were unsatisfactory since the provision made was one of the of the school's sites, even though this site is eleven miles away from the one at which the pupil attended. As headteacher you chose this course of action because you believed that it would best address the pupil's learning difficulties and/or disabilities for which he has a statement of special educational need. The option of moving pupils to another site of the same school is not available under the regulations and you have discussed this matter with the local authority.

Planned arrangements for day 6 are now satisfactory. The school fully understands the requirement to ensure that pupils receive, off-site, suitable and full-time education from day 6 of fixed term exclusion or provision in partnership with other schools. The text of an appropriate letter to parents of pupils excluded for six days or more is on file and this meets requirements. Reciprocal arrangements have been made with a partner school to provide suitable, full time, high quality education from day 6. The school has not yet considered the costs involved in this. You acknowledge that the local authority has kept schools informed about day 6 requirements and that a protocol to ensure that the authority is immediately informed of exclusions is now in place.

The school has introduced preventative measures. These include a new behaviour management policy with a traffic light system that the pupils who all have learning difficulties can readily understand. The use of merits and rewards for good behaviour has been extended and the quiet room is used more effectively for brief withdrawals. Internal exclusion is selectively used sometimes in conjunction with brief fixed term exclusion. Innovatively the school seeks to de-escalate classroom difficulties by inviting parents, in some cases, to work alongside their child. Skilled mentors have been appointed who support vulnerable pupils and families and where it is helpful to combat disaffection alternative curriculum providers are used. All of this has led to a reduction of days lost to exclusion.

I talked with a pupil who was excluded for more than five days before the day 6 regulations came into force. She did not enjoy being out of school but feels that the experience has made her think about her difficulty in controlling her temper and behave better. The pupil's parent praised the school for its approach to her daughter and thought the process of reintegrating her to school was helpful and thorough. The pupil has not been excluded again.

My visit to your school 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.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael McDowell
Additional Inspector