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Mr L Griffin
Headteacher
Stratton Education Centre
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Dear Mr Griffin

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 25 November 2008 to look at your work in providing for pupils from day 6 of their permanent exclusion.

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 an interview with you, scrutiny of relevant documentation, a telephone call to a parent, a lesson observation and a meeting with six pupils. My judgements are related to the arrangements and outcomes for pupils whose exclusions meant you had to provide education for them from day 6 of their exclusions.

Your records, and those of the local authority (LA), show that many pupils do not gain full time education on day 6 of exclusion. Most often this is caused by difficulties in communicating, and in meeting, with parents and carers in organising the move to Stratton Centre. However, you reported that toward the end of the last academic year a small number of permanently excluded pupils did not gain access to full time education on day 6 of exclusion, or for sometime thereafter, because the centre was at capacity. This is unsatisfactory and I have raised this issue with the LA.

Achievement and standards for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

Once at the centre, the achievement of pupils is good. Pupils at KS3 make good progress in returning successfully to mainstream schools. Those at KS4 are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of teaching and learning for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

In the one lesson observed the quality of teaching and learning was good. The lesson was well planned, the tasks were interesting and relevant to pupils and, in the main, they worked hard and well at their learning. They made good progress in understanding the importance of a range of organisations in satisfying needs in today's world.

Quality of the curriculum for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

The quality of the curriculum for day 6 pupils is good. However, the centre has difficulty in ensuring continuity in learning for all pupils over the initial period of their exclusion, because a good number do not join on day 6 of their exclusion. The focus of the curriculum for pupils at KS3 is appropriate and this shows in the good number of pupils who successfully return to mainstream provision.

Leadership and management of provision for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

Leadership and management of the day 6 provision are good. Identifying the centre as the designated place for day 6 provision for all permanently excluded pupils in the authority causes some problems. Last year there were more pupils permanently excluded than there were places available at the centre, and this is a weakness. You, as head of centre, know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and lead a strenuous effort by staff to have pupils join on day 6 of their exclusion and to attend regularly thereafter.

Inclusion

Provision is very much tailored to individuals and as such the needs of pupils are met well. Staff know the pupils well. The one parent interviewed was very positive about the quality of provision for her son saying that he attended more regularly and learned more at the centre than was the case in his mainstream school. Generally, pupils hold the same opinion.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- working with the local authority to ensure that all pupils are able to enter the centre on day 6 of their exclusion.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the day 6 provision in 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 the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

D. Alan Dobbins
Additional Inspector