

8 October 2010

Mr R Worthington
Headteacher
St Michael's CofE High School
Throne Road
Rowley Regis
West Midlands
B65 9LD

Dear Mr Worthington

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation and that of your staff when I visited your school on 21 September 2010. Please also pass on my thanks to the students and managers of additional educational provision with whom I had helpful discussions.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on examining the use of alternative provision for students who are vulnerable to underachieving, and the impact that this has on outcomes for these students.

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.

Outcomes

- The school's evaluation indicates that last year, almost all the students who attended an alternative provision placement improved their attendance at school and sustained their involvement in learning.
- Attendance at the alternative provision enables students to gain some qualifications, reflecting their vocational training and the development of their numeracy, literacy and personal skills. Assisted by their attendance at alternative provision, almost all students progress to related employment, apprenticeships or further training.

Selecting and commissioning

- The school has commissioned a range of alternative provision for students which focuses on improving students' basic numeracy and literacy skills, raising their self-esteem and offering vocational training.
- The school appreciates the support of the local authority and the Education Business Partnership which has enabled it to quality assure and identify suitable provision across the local area. The school is rightly seeking ways of enabling students who attend alternative provision to access more accredited courses.

Monitoring, evaluation and support

- The school checks each student's attendance and their general progress regularly. Any non-attendance is followed up quickly. The school works closely with providers and has information to show the overall impact of the alternative provision. It is developing further some aspects of monitoring to show more clearly the specific skills being acquired by students.
- Students feel well supported by the alternative providers and by the school.

I hope that this visit has been useful in the further development of this aspect of the school's work.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
Her Majesty's Inspector