

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



6 February 2013

Miss C Brown
Principal
Ounsdale High School
Ounsdale Road
Wombourne
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV5 8BJ

Dear Miss Brown

Ofsted 2012 13 survey inspection programme: schools' use of alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit with Sandy Hayes HMI on 29 and 30 January 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit we met with you, the vice principal responsible for alternative provision and other colleagues who take a leading role in this aspect of the school's work. We also had the opportunity to review a range of documents and talk to students who attend alternative provision and their parents. We also visited Re-Entry and City of Wolverhampton College, the two providers that your students attend.

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.

Strengths of this aspect of the school's work

- The school's choice of providers is as a result of a careful selection process in collaboration with colleagues in the South Staffordshire partnership of schools. The provider that most students attend was chosen because of its clear focus on preparing young people to reintegrate with mainstream school. This fits well with the school's vision to include all students.
- The school has established a good team to work with the small number of students who attend alternative provision, and with the providers. This is one indicator of the high priority that the school gives to this aspect of its

work. These leaders and managers think carefully about how they can make improvements and work well with the providers, particularly with Re-Entry, to ensure that the placements are suitable.

- There are well established links with the provider Re-Entry, the school's main partner in alternative provision. This means that by the time a placement begins, students and parents or carers have a good understanding of what Re-Entry can do to help and how they will do it. The school also makes sure that the mentors and tutors at Re-Entry have high quality information about students' personal, social and emotional needs. Basic information is also provided about students' current levels of attainment in English and mathematics.
- School leaders consider carefully how to minimise any disruption to students' long-term learning. Work is available for students to complete while at the short-stay placement and the school's learning mentor helps students to catch up on their return to school. When students are being reintegrated into school, where possible, their timetables are organised to maintain continuity with their English and mathematics lessons.
- Students describe how the placements have helped them to better manage and understand how they deal with difficult situations, for example, by being able to control their temper or not becoming involved in potentially disruptive behaviour. One student also described how tutors at Re-Entry helped her develop her artistic skills, with a piece of her work being displayed at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.
- There are regular reviews of students' personal and social development during their placement at Re-Entry. This means that school leaders know when students are ready to return to school for all or part of the working week.
- Most of the small number of students involved have better attitudes to learning and are attending school more regularly. This is because of improved personal and social confidence as a result of their placements.
- The parents with whom inspectors spoke were generally positive about their children's experience. For example, one mother explained that she could see her child becoming more confident and having a better attitude to education.
- Partnership with a local further education college means that the school can also offer individual students the option of studying in a college environment. Previous students have achieved recognised qualifications which have enabled them to progress to further education. In addition, students follow courses that lead to qualifications in English and mathematics.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- developing protocols with each provider to make sure that there is sufficient information available to enable the school to evaluate students' academic progress
- establishing opportunities for senior leaders to be able to evaluate the quality of teaching and other aspects of the provision at the placements that students attend
- making sure that school leaders have more detailed knowledge of the progress of those students who spend no time in school and attend college courses.

Yours sincerely

James McNeillie
Her Majesty's Inspector