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Ms A Murphy  
Headteacher  
Bishop Douglass School, Finchley  
Hamilton Road  
East Finchley  
London  
N2 0SQ

Dear Ms Murphy

### **13 survey inspection programme: schools' use of alternative provision**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 30 January to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with your assistant headteacher and with students and examined relevant documents. I also visited Boxing Academy, Hackney and College of North West London, two of the providers that your students currently 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 curriculum is broad and flexible so that it meets the needs and interests of the vast majority of students. A senior member of staff has specific responsibility for ensuring that students achieve as well as possible and that all remain engaged in education. To support this, the school provides a range of additional interventions, courses and flexible personalised programmes.
- As a result, off-site provision is only considered for a tiny number of students. Providers are chosen with great care and the school is pro-active in seeking suitable alternative provision that best meets individual students' needs and circumstances.

- The providers and school believe that careful preparation is an important factor in a successful placement. School staff, students and families make good use of introductory days and interviews so that everyone is well informed, particularly about requirements and expectations. Students feel very well supported both at school and at the providers.
- Communication is good. The providers are well informed about the individual needs of each student through detailed referral forms requested by them and completed in detail by the school. They, in turn, keep the school regularly updated on the students' attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- The school places great importance on all students gaining qualifications, particularly in English and mathematics. Where off- site provision is for one day, the curriculum is timetabled and options managed so that the students have extra time for English and mathematics. Where off-site provision is full time, the provider is required to guarantee that students study GCSEs in English and mathematics and other subjects at a similar level. The school no longer uses off-site providers where, in the past, the school believes the quality of provision was not good enough to enable students to gain qualifications in these important subjects.
- Pupils value the alternative provision highly. One said that going to college was the best decision he ever made. Another said that the school, 'hit the nail on the head' in finding his placement. Attendance, behaviour and attitudes towards learning have improved significantly both in the off-site providers and also in the school.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- using regular reviews of student's progress with the off-site provider to keep them informed about, and seek to explain the reasons for, changes and improvements experienced in school.

Yours sincerely

**Sheena MacDonald**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**