

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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



6 March 2013

Mr A Bloxham
Principal
Preston School Academy
Monks Dale
Yeovil
Somerset
BA21 3JD

Dear Mr Bloxham

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 on 28 February and 1 March 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with staff at the school and a group of students. I analysed documentation and visited the following providers that your students attend: Transport Systems (Western) LTD, Cyril Gallie – The Hair Shop and REACH (alternative and complimentary educational solutions for individuals).

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 academy meets the needs of the vast majority of its students well within the main school curriculum. For a few students each year the academy arranges suitable off-site activities which mean these students complete their education and are then able to access further education, employment or training.
- The academy uses the local authority database to find suitable placements as part of the local 14-19 agreement. All placements on the database have had suitable checks by the local authority.
- The timetable is carefully planned so that students who attend alternative provision do this instead of one or two of their options and hence they do

not miss any other lessons. All students who attend alternative provision complete a GCSE in mathematics and English as well as other courses and they are therefore not disadvantaged by studying off-site.

- These students are well-supported back in school where they meet with their tutor to discuss how well they are getting on at their placements.
- Students who attend REACH have a report each week from the provider which is shared with school. This report identifies how well students are developing, including in becoming more responsible and in becoming more confident. Students who attend work placements have verbal feedback and receive a professional reference at the end of their time at the placement.
- The school gives a good range of information to providers, including any particular learning or social needs. All students have a card to record their attendance at their placements and the academy is notified immediately of any absence. A member of staff telephones each placement frequently to get feedback on how well the students have worked and also visits the placements every half term.
- Students report that they enjoy their placements, they find the work challenging and it helps them to be more self-sufficient. They also say it helps them relate better to adults and they recognise the importance of speaking to customers in a professional way.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- systematically recording the development of students' key employability and personal skills during their placements, and reporting these developments to parents as part of the annual student report.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector