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Mr G Vyse
Headteacher
The Hundred of Hoo School
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Dear Mr Vyse

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 2 and 3 July 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision.

During the visit I met with you and members of the leadership team. I met with pupils in school and at their placements, and examined a range of documents and pupils' files. I also visited the following providers that your pupils attend:

- Octopus Training
- UK Style Academy
- Medway Business Education Partnership
- Love 2 Learn

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 works closely with a range of different providers including Octopus training, UK Style Academy and Love 2 Learn in order to ensure the personal and learning needs, interests and aspirations of each pupil are met. There are excellent procedures for selecting and commissioning suitable alternative provision.

- The school is supported by the local authority, which provides a directory of alternative provision and advises the school on the commissioning of additional new alternative placements. The Medway Business Education Partnership provides excellent support to commission, and monitor extended work placements for pupils from the school. They also support the school in conducting safeguarding and health and safety checks at each location.
- The school ensures that all providers meet requirements for the safeguarding, health and safety of pupils. Staff from the school visit each site to ensure that due consideration is given to pupils' safety and the suitability of accommodation and resources. Close attention is given to tracking pupils' attendance at their alternative placements.
- Referral forms provided by the school and forms, completed by pupils and their parents, ensure that providers are well informed about the individual needs of each pupil. The school provides a useful pen portrait of each pupil so that placements have a good understanding of pupils' needs, starting points and capabilities.
- There is a clear contract that sets out the responsibilities of the school, employer, parents and pupil. Parents and pupils are provided with detailed information about the activities that pupils will participate in and they receive a written report every six weeks, which identifies pupils' progress and targets for the next period.
- Individual pupils are supported very well by the school's alternative provision co-ordinator and other staff who visit them regularly in their placements. Pupils and providers say they can contact an identified person in the school with any issues and that school staff respond promptly to any enquiries. Excellent relationships between the school and providers promote regular communication.
- Off-site provision is timetabled so that pupils do not miss any key subjects. Consequently, pupils have a balanced curriculum that includes in English and mathematics. Evidence from the school's tracking information shows that alternative placements have a beneficial effect on pupils' performance in school.
- Most alternative provision in Key Stage 4 leads to some form of nationally recognised Level 1 or Level 2 accreditation. There are clear pathways for pupils to follow and many pupils say they will choose to continue their chosen alternative after Year 11, either at school or at a local college.
- The school reviews and judges the effectiveness of the provision rigorously. This ensures that pupils make good progress on their various courses and attend regularly. Providers are required to give the school a written progress report every six weeks and to keep the school informed if there are any concerns. Pupils' and parents' views are also sought regularly.

- Pupils value the alternative provision. They enjoy the opportunity to develop practical skills and solve real problems. Pupils say they are prepared very well for their placements and the school is clear about how pupils should conduct themselves when working off-site. Students each have two days of training to teach them about health and safety issues and to prepare them for their work placements. Parents and pupils have opportunities to visit the different placements before making a final decision about starting a course there.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- considering offering safeguarding refresher training for staff from providers offering alternative placements.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis
Her Majesty's Inspector