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8 July 2013

Mr A Davis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Davis

**Ofsted 2013 14 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 25 and 26 June 2013 to look at the school's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you and your leadership team, groups of students, including some students who had left the school but wanted to let me know how much they appreciated the support they had received. I also met the Principal at Ratcliffe Special School, the Headteacher from South and West Devon Personalised Learning Service (the Bridge) and the member of staff from South Devon College who has responsibility for linking with the school. I visited the Bridge and the Red Rock centre, a purpose built community facility adjacent to the school which has the specialist areas for hair and beauty, catering and construction that your students use.

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**

- You rightly recognised in 2009 that students who were attending alternative provision were not receiving a good education as they were not gaining appropriate qualifications. You worked with the local authority and community to design The Red Rock centre which was built adjacent to the school. Students now attend this centre to study hair and beauty, catering and construction.

- The school greatly values all students and it has made sure that it provides excellent opportunities for all to achieve. It has been highly successful at supporting students who are likely to be excluded and those who have been permanently excluded from other local schools or academies. For example a student who arrived at the school in Year 10, having been excluded from a number of schools and missed a significant proportion of time from her education, could not speak highly enough how she had been supported by the school and through her alternative education programme. As she said 'it has turned my life around and now I am going back to study A levels.'
- Students who study at Red Rock in Years 10 and 11 are very well supported by tutors from South Devon College. Students attend for a complete day which is timetabled so that they do not miss any lessons and they are still able to choose options which interest them. Tutors plan the vocational sessions to include opportunities for students to develop their functional skills as well as skills in their vocational areas, for example how to speak to clients when they attend the hairdresser or the use of ratios when building or changing recipes. Subject teachers back in school do not always take opportunities when covering similar topics to use students' experiences to enhance their learning.
- All students who attend alternative provision complete a Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE) as well as completing a number of other GCSEs including mathematics and English. Students greatly enjoy their vocational courses because they find the work very relevant to their career intentions. They say they really enjoy the different way tutors teach them and many see this as a good introduction to college life when they attend after they have left school. Many extend their studies when they attend college after they have left school
- The school is adjusting the vocational options available and is hoping to introduce a horticultural or land based course. Some of the courses are highly appropriate to students' career aspirations and give them suitable qualifications but they are not recognised when the school's achievement is evaluated against national data. Because the school has identified outstanding improvements to behaviour, attendance and attitudes of students who attend Red Rock, students continue to study these course as well as other relevant qualifications which do 'count'. No student has failed to continue with education, employment or training when they leave school at the end of Year 11. Having the site next to the school means time is no longer lost by travelling.
- Students who attend the Bridge are supported for a short time in order to help them improve their behaviour. Additional support is provided by Bridge staff when students are re-integrated into school. Support is also made available to students who are having problems meeting the high standards for behaviour expected in school. Red Rock is also used as a base for students who are identified in Year 6 who may need additional

support. This support starts before students arrive at the school and is continued across Years 7 to 9.

- The close liaison with the local special school means any students who need additional specialist support can spend a short time at the special school as well as students from the special school working at Dawlish Community College. For example students from the special school have studied drama and information communication technology.
- The school gives a good range of information to providers, including any particular learning or social needs. Students are accompanied by a member of staff when they attend Red Rock. The governing body receives frequent updates on the achievement of students who attend Red Rock as part of their checks on all aspects of students' achievement.

**An area for improvement, which we discussed, was:**

- incorporating work done by students when attending Red Rock into lessons when back in school to ensure teachers use the real life applications to give their lessons greater relevance.

Yours sincerely

**Michael Smith**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**