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Ms S Miles
Interim Principal
Harris Academy Bromley
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Dear Ms Miles

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 30 January 2014 to look at the academy's use of alternative provision. The academy has not used alternative provision until this year so it is not possible to evaluate the long term impact of students attending alternative provision. This year the academy is using Harris Aspire which is a school set up specifically to provide small group support for students at risk of permanent exclusion, as well as The Respite Centre, part of London Borough of Bromley's behaviour services, which I visited during the inspection. During the inspection I met also met with you and one of the assistant principals, and with some students.

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 two providers currently being used have been carefully chosen so that the academy is assured that students' safety, welfare and academic needs are being met.
- There is a strong focus on ensuring that the students achieve academically. All have full timetables and are studying several GCSE courses, including English, mathematics and science, and BTEC courses such as hair and beauty. They are being supported to make up for previously lost ground through small group and one to one support. Their achievement in each

course is carefully checked and the students are on track to make at least expected progress.

- The academy places a high priority on ensuring that all students gain the qualifications and skills which will enable them to go onto further education or employment. It is too early to say whether the alternative provision is successful but current students all expect to continue with their education.
- The Respite Centre visited during the inspection requires a full range of written information about each student from the academy as part of the referral process and this is followed up with personal meetings and regular discussions. As a result, the Centre feels that the academy is fully engaged with them and provides further practical support for example by giving them information about course content.
- Although the outside of the Respite Centre building is grim, the inside is bright, well ordered and the displays on the walls celebrate the achievements of the young people in a wide range of subjects. The students who attend the centre complete a life skills programme which develops their personal skills, their understanding of society and helps them to move onto the next stage of their education. The students themselves say that this is interesting and important.
- Harris Aspire and the academy work very closely together and use the same regular and detailed systems to track academic and personal development. The academy and the Respite Centre also carefully track attendance and the Centre comments on social and personal development, including behaviour in the weekly reports. Attendance has improved significantly since the students started attending the alternative provision.
- The assistant principal for student support services knows the individual students very well. Aspire is very closely linked to the academy and is just across the road and there is very regular contact. She also keeps in regular contact with the Respite Centre and the students. She visits every half term at least and has regular discussions with the Centre teacher in charge.
- The students enjoy attending the alternative provision. They like being part of a smaller group and say that the provision is less stressful than mainstream school. They believe that their attendance and behaviour have improved and also that the small groups and extra support are helping them to catch up with their studies. Two students said that their participation in a Christmas production was a high point and they did not believe they would have had this opportunity in their main school.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- requiring the Respite Centre's weekly and half termly reports to reflect the strategies and targets outlined in the students' personal plans
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the Respite Centre and evaluating the evidence that students are making at least expected progress.

My concerns about the registration status of one of the providers you are using has been reported to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector