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1 December 2010

Mr K Purbhoo
Head of Centre
Southwark Inclusive Learning Service
Porlock Hall
Porlock Street
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Dear Mr Purbhoo

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: alternative provision

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 1 November 2010 to look at your unit's use of alternative provision. Please would you also thank your colleagues from the local authority and other providers for taking the time to meet me.

As outlined in my initial letter, the visit had a particular focus on examining the use of alternative provision for students who are vulnerable to underachieving, and the impact this has on the outcomes for these 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.

Outcomes

- Over recent years, students have gained a wider range of Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications in vocational subjects.
- The offsite programmes are successful in re-engaging students in learning and giving them important insights into the world of work or further education.
- The number of students who remain in education or progress into employment or training when they leave Southwark Inclusive Learning Service (SILS) has increased year by year.

Selecting and commissioning

- The use of alternative, off-site provision is integral to the curriculum offer at SILS. This is in response to a strategic desire to work closely in partnership with other providers to offer a wide range of academic and vocational courses as well as to pressures on accommodation.
- SILS works closely with a small number of main providers, including a local special school and college. In addition, it offers placements at a wide range of different providers so that a personalised offer can be designed to meet the particular interests and needs of individuals.

Monitoring, evaluation and support

- Strong working relationships with providers and centre staff mean that there is detailed knowledge of each student's progress and this is monitored carefully. Any problems can be quickly addressed. Attendance is monitored diligently. Providers write regular reports that inform SILS' reporting to parents. Providers participate in the annual celebration of achievement event at Southwark Cathedral.
- All providers are subject to quality-assurance checks by the local authority. Currently officers from Southwark are working to improve the consistency of quality assurance procedures across its services and across other local authorities.
- Students appreciate the opportunities they have to learn in different environments. They enjoy their placements and are learning how to conduct themselves in more adult environments. They recognise that they are gaining important skills and qualifications for the future.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop alternative provision in the unit.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane
Her Majesty's Inspector