

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@Ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Ms J Spensley
Headteacher
Stafford Pupil Referral Unit
The Stables
120 Newport Road
Stafford
ST16 1BY

Dear Ms Spensley

Ofsted survey inspection programme: the extent and quality of provision for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 4 November 2008 to look at your work in providing for students from day 6 of their permanent exclusion.

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. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with yourself and members of your staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, discussion with pupils, a phone call to a parent and the observation of lessons. My judgements are related to the arrangements and outcomes for pupils whose exclusions meant you had to provide education for them from day 6 of their exclusions.

The overall effectiveness of the provision for pupils once they attend is of good quality. However as a number of pupils are not able to begin on day 6 of an exclusion this is not satisfactory as it does not meet requirements.

Achievement and standards for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

Pupils who are permanently excluded make good progress and achieve well in their work, their attendance and in their behaviour and attitudes. Attainment on entry and standards are below national averages. Those in Key Stage 4 gain good qualifications and almost all go on to further education, training or work. Pupils feel that they have a sense of renewed purpose when coming here. Younger pupils successfully reintegrate back into mainstream schools.

Quality of teaching and learning for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

The quality of teaching and learning is good with careful planning to take learning forward quickly. Pupils make evidently good progress in lessons and skilled teaching ensures that work is tailored very closely to individual pupils needs. Relationships are very positive in lessons and pupils concentrate hard and behave well.

Quality of the curriculum for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

The highly personalised and good academic curriculum, with strong attention to personal development is leading to success for pupils in their work. Excellent links with other agencies and parents supports this process well. Liaison with schools is of good quality and there is some excellent involvement of the Unit when pupils first return to another school. The unit recognises that, due to its requirements before entry, not all pupils arrive within six days. In addition not all pupils engage fully with the unit, especially when they first arrive. Increased working with schools and inclusion officers before a pupil is excluded has begun and is seen as a crucial first step in overcoming these barriers.

Leadership and management of provision for pupils from day 6 of exclusion

Leadership and management is good with excellent organisation to accommodate the sudden large increase in pupil numbers whilst maintaining quality. There is regular collection of information about pupils' achievements, their attendance and behaviour to monitor progress, well supported by the School Improvement Partner. The unit recognises a need to develop the use of this information more strategically in forming a better overview of quality and trends to inform further development.

Inclusion

The unit supports good inclusion with successful re-integration of pupils in KS3 and successful work placements for pupils in KS4. Pupils are enabled to achieve key skills qualifications at a good level alongside vocational accreditation at a level which will enable them to compete appropriately in the workplace. More importantly pupils gain a renewed sense of self worth and improved attitudes and behaviour which supports their transition towards a more fruitful future.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- engage in a dialogue with schools and the inclusion officers at an earlier stage to ensure that placements can begin for all pupils from day 6 of exclusion

- use the information collected about pupils' progress more strategically to pin point more accurately where improvements in provision are most needed.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop the day 6 provision for permanently excluded students in the centre.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary
Additional Inspector