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16 May 2013

Ms D Pickering  
Principal  
Landau Forte Academy  
Woodland Road  
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Staffordshire  
B77 4FF

Dear Ms Pickering

### **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 2 and 3 May 2013 to look at the academy's use of alternative provision. During the visit I met with you and members of your senior staff, examined a range of documents and met with a group of students. I had meetings with the headteacher from Kettlebrook Short Stay School and the work experience coordinator from the District Inclusion Partnership. I also visited the following providers that your students attend:

- Torc Vocational Centre
- Rainbow World
- Oakhill Childcare.

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**

- There are relatively few students who attend alternative provision following the revised approach that you adopted on your appointment as Principal. This arose from a strong commitment to retain as many students as possible on site and provide appropriate support to enable them to achieve as highly as possible, particularly in their GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics. This approach has been highly effective; outcomes for all students have improved over the past two years.

- A carefully considered, flexible approach enables students who are struggling to cope with mainstream provision to follow a variety of pathways within the academy together with a small amount of time on a work placement, either on the academy site or elsewhere. The alternative provision complements and does not replace the academy's provision. One significant strength is that students remain firmly part of the academy and are subject to the same high expectations of their progress and achievements.
- The academy's creative approach to the development of personalised pathways for students who are potentially disengaged from education is paying dividends. There are numerous success stories of overcoming barriers to learning for students who were most at risk of underachievement but have grasped these opportunities and are now back on track. These students have been supported in the academy and benefited from work placements, either on-site or from a range of off-site providers, or home tuition. The approach has been highly effective; the academy's achievement data indicates several notable successes where students have made significant gains and achieved credible English and mathematics GCSE grades, some exceeding their targets.
- Good attention is paid to meeting students' individual needs and aspirations in securing alternative placements that will provide appropriate pathways and support each individual to pursue his or her interests. Most of the students are highly positive about their experiences, recognising that they are developing relevant skills, and appreciating the significance of this for their future working lives. It is clear that alternative provision is supporting several of these students to make positive choices about progression post-16.
- Good relationships and communication channels have been established with alternative providers, whether sourced independently by the academy or through the District Inclusion Panel. The placements have been suitably checked for inclusion in the authority's directory of locally approved providers and offer safe, appropriate venues for students.
- The feedback provided by alternative providers on students' progress and achievements is variable. Some good practice is evident; for example, the close monitoring and reporting in place at Torc Vocational Centre but in others it is more informal.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- monitoring all external placements consistently, including seeking formal feedback of the progress and achievements of students so that the outcomes are tracked and recorded more rigorously, in line with the close tracking and monitoring evident within the academy.

Yours sincerely

**Judith Matharu**  
**Additional Inspector**