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Mr A Lovett  
Tiverton High School  
Bolham Road  
Tiverton  
Devon  
EX16 6SQ

Dear Mr Lovett

### **Ofsted 2012–13 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 16 and 17 October 2012 to look at the school's use of alternative provision.

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 school is highly inclusive and ensures that all students are able to succeed. While the majority of courses are run within school there are opportunities for students across a wide ability range to access appropriate additional courses from a variety of local providers.
- The providers include an equine studies centre which provides a supportive learning environment for students who have autistic spectrum disorders and an alternative education provider that specialises in providing for students who have self-esteem and behaviour issues. Local colleges offer courses for students in vehicle mechanics, hair and beauty and land based skills, including agriculture. One of the courses is run by the external provider on the school site where students are developing an unused swimming pool; these students also visit a local farm. This reduces the time spent travelling.
- The carefully planned curriculum ensures that all students' needs are met. Additional support for students who may not be able to successfully

complete their time in school may include working with a local provider or offsite outdoor education opportunities. Importantly, students who attend alternative provision are timetabled so they do not miss any lessons in school. Consequently when students work off-site they are not disadvantaged.

- All additional courses include suitable qualifications and a high proportion of the students that completed courses in 2012 went on to train further in their chosen area when they left school.
- When students work with the providers they often develop their literacy, numeracy and information communication (ICT) skills well, for example by reading technical manuals, writing instructions on how another student would complete a task, using ratios to mix the correct proportions or incorporating photographs into reports on work with small animals.
- The school provides a good range of information to providers, including any particular learning or social needs. Providers report to the school on the progress of students. These reports form part of the student's school report and include not only how well a student is progressing with their work-based skills but also their social development. One provider supplies very detailed information around students taking responsibility, their emotions, their self-esteem, personal qualities, understanding of their environment and their trustworthiness.
- Students report that they enjoy their placements. They say that they find the work challenging and it helps them become better prepared for the world of work. They enjoy working in a more adult environment and some particularly enjoy working in the open. As one student said, expressing the opinions of others: 'It's great getting stuck in and working outside. We are making a difference to this area and looking forward to seeing the wildlife again, we hope for some ducks to return along with the kingfishers'.
- Students said that they were well cared for and that health and safety issues were always discussed and explained prior to them starting a new activity.

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

- incorporating work done by student on their placements into lessons when back in school to ensure greater coherence and to give greater value to the activities student complete when off-site.

Yours sincerely

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