

Serco Inspections  
Cedar House  
21 William Street  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 1LH

**Ofsted**  
T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Serco**  
**Direct T** 0121 683 3888



17 March 2011

Dr S Pam  
Headteacher  
The Cavendish School  
Warners End Road  
Hemel Hempstead  
HP1 3DW

Dear Dr Pam

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Cavendish School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when my colleague and I inspected your school on 16 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner and to the students who we met, all of whom gave their time to talk to us.

Since your last inspection there have been no major contextual changes.

As a result of the inspection on 9 October 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

satisfactory progress in making improvements.

*and*

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school is setting targets for improvement and is now on track to achieve them. At the end of this year, tracking data shows that the targets of 64% of Year 11 students gaining five A\* to C GCSE passes, with 47% gaining the grades in both English and mathematics, should be bettered. A similar pattern of improvement exists in the sixth form. Next year's targets reflect a continuation of this improvement, reflecting rising aspirations. Teachers are now better able to track the

September 2010



progress of individuals and to understand their current achievement and progress. Teachers are increasingly accountable for ensuring that individual needs are taken into account and examples of good practice exist throughout the school. Leaders recognise that the next important step for the school is to ensure that all teachers are supported to become as effective as the best.

Curriculum leaders are now more able to talk about individual student's progress. Class teachers are given tracking information, but the monitoring of its impact varies between faculties. Progress overall is only satisfactory because there is too much inconsistency in teachers' practice. In the best lessons observed during the visit, teachers were utilising their knowledge to ensure that all pupils had the right level of challenge. In these lessons, students were engaged and rising to the challenges they were given. However, some lessons are still too teacher-dominated and the extent to which the curriculum has been adapted to individual needs is limited.

Some teachers use assessment effectively so students understand their progress, the levels at which they are working and their 'next steps'. At its best, constructive marking supports learning, but again there is an issue of consistency. The implementation of policies, such as that for assessment, is far from uniform and the degree of monitoring being undertaken varies between departments. There are excellent examples of self- and peer-assessment being used effectively to help students think about their work, its strengths and areas for improvement, as seen in a Year 11 mathematics and a Year 9 English lesson. Elsewhere, some lessons remain too teacher-dominated, with assessment being largely limited to rather generalised praise. Teaching at Key Stage 3 in particular still lacks the consistent challenge and rigour that the effective use of this information should bring.

The school is a designated specialist sports college which is having a positive impact in driving up standards, not least among those boys who had previously found academic subjects did not engage them. Physical education staff have been successful in using their expertise to motivate students across the curriculum and support the development of good practice.

The quality of governance has improved and, under the effective leadership of the Chair, is clearly focussed on supporting school improvement. The development of effective management structures increasingly holds managers at all levels accountable for the quality of teaching and learning, even though there is a discrepancy in the effectiveness in which challenges are translated into individual classrooms. The challenge to management is to ensure that best practice is reflected in every classroom.

Local authority support has been very effective. For example, the Gaining Ground initiative has enabled the school to partner with a high achieving school to start the process of sharing best practice. The School Improvement Partner is also active in

supporting the school, illustrated in her regular attendance at the regular Raising Achievement Plan meetings.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2009.**

- Sharpen monitoring and evaluation in order to identify precise priorities that are related to improving teaching and learning and the progress of different groups of students. Ensure that agreed procedures and strategies are implemented by teachers across all key stages and curriculum areas.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that students of different abilities are routinely challenged and supported by a range of interesting activities and resources so that standards rise.
- Ensure that students have regular written guidance on their progress towards the targets and the next steps to take to reach them