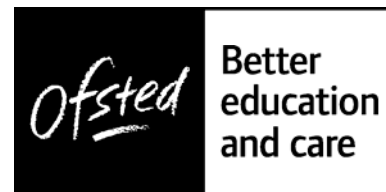


Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

**Direct Tel** 020 7421 6594  
**Direct Fax** 020 7421 6855

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



19 May 2005

Ms C Ellins  
Headteacher  
Bellemoor School  
Bellemoor Road  
Shirley  
Southampton  
SO15 7QU

Dear Ms Ellins

### **Implementation of Bellemoor Secondary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Linda Kelsey HMI, Brenda Cusdin HMI and Michael Pipes, Additional Inspector, to your school on 11 and 12 May 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school's action plan is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses.

The LEA's statement of action is satisfactory.

The school has made limited progress since being subject to special measures.

The LEA's target date of spring term 2006 for the removal of special measures is ambitious.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, Children's Services Director of Education for Southampton.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of School Improvement

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF BELLEMOOR SECONDARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit 31 lessons or parts of lessons, three registration sessions and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors and LEA advisers. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the LEA.

The quality of the school's action plan is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses. The actions proposed respond appropriately to the concerns raised in the section 10 inspection report. Furthermore, when all of the desired improvements are securely in place, the school will have moved much closer to the convincing development goals set by the headteacher.

However, the timeline for achieving the many tasks is very ambitious. This agenda is particularly challenging given the continued staffing difficulties and weaknesses in leadership at the senior and middle tier. There is already some slippage in the scheduled implementation. The action plan gives no clear overview of who holds the prime responsibility for each of the major thrusts within it. The senior management structure is planned to change in September 2005, which provides a timely opportunity to allocate overarching accountability more clearly.

The LEA's statement of action is satisfactory, covering a range of relevant expertise to support the school's endeavours. The LEA has suitable mechanisms for tracking progress with the school's action plan and checking whether the support is well targeted. The LEA has increased its commitment to the school, assigning two advisers to take on some of the responsibilities that would normally be undertaken by senior managers. The substantial support that the LEA is providing is valued by the school.

In 2004 at Key Stage 4, the standards achieved in GCSE were below average for pupils who gained five or more grades A\*-C and well below average for those who achieved one or more grade A\*-G. Compared with similar schools, the number of pupils gaining five or more A\*- C grades at GCSE was broadly average. However, the number of pupils who achieved one or more grades A\*-G was well below average.

In 11 lessons the pupils' progress was good, including a physical education lesson where it was very good. These good lessons were characterised by clear planning, shared objectives, high expectations and a lively pace to maintain interest. In five lessons, the teaching was good but the progress made by the pupils was only satisfactory. In these lessons, though the teachers had planned well for a variety of activities and learning outcomes, the pupils did not make the expected progress, due to weak attitudes to learning and poor concentration skills. In seven lessons the pupils' progress was unsatisfactory; it was poor in two. In these lessons, slow pace, insufficient intellectual challenge and sometimes lack of subject rigour by the teacher, led to lack of concentration and application by the pupils. Skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) remain underdeveloped in many subjects.

The literacy initiative lacks a leader; although there was some training, staffing changes and a lack of structure have led to inconsistent provision and practice. The head of mathematics has initiated an audit of numeracy strategy activities across departments; some lessons include elements of the numeracy strategy but far more do not. The lack of this basic provision, in a school where there is a clear need for improvement in literacy and numeracy, is a serious impediment to raising standards.

The quality of teaching was very good in one lesson and good in 14. Good teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science, physical education, religious education, music, history, geography, French, Spanish and personal, social and health education. In seven lessons, however, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science and art.

The school recognises that the curriculum, particularly in the upper years has focused on GCSE coursework. For next September the Year 10 options have been opened for free choice with some guidance. The curriculum has been broadened to include work-related learning, links with a local college and an innovative course on thinking skills in the nearby sixth form college.

The school has a good range of attainment data and uses commercial tests effectively to help in the assessment of potential. The data is well managed by a senior teacher to provide the statistics for overall target-setting.

The extent to which teachers and pupils know and understand individual targets is variable. In the classroom, too little attention is paid to the needs of individual pupils to meet their personal targets, including those with special educational needs, the more able and those with English as an additional language. The marking of books is inconsistent and too rarely includes constructive feedback to

encourage improvement. Many of the pupils' exercise books are untidy and presentation, including handwriting, is often poor.

The headteacher enthusiastically articulates her convincing, longer-term goals for the school. Rightly, she wants to develop talent within the staff; she is utilising a range of external expertise to support those with the potential to take up middle leadership roles. New roles for non-teaching staff are being introduced thoughtfully. There are sensible plans to improve the school's image in the community through an attractive and informative school website. This developing website is also part of the school's active approach to attracting and recruiting new teachers.

There will be a substantial reduction in the number of pupils on roll within this financial year and the school is receiving a reduced budget allocation. The headteacher, business manager and chair of governors have identified savings that can be made in staffing costs to avoid a large in-year budget deficit. The governing body is supportive as well as challenging and this is valued by the headteacher. Governors are kept well informed.

Most pupils behave well and are polite and courteous around the school. The relationships between teachers and pupils have improved. The pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility through shared objectives for learning. They are keener to learn, expressing an interest in the topic and getting on with their tasks. In nearly a half of the lessons, the pupils' behaviour and attitudes were good. However, in a number of lessons the continual chatter of students and the lack of attention given to teachers' instructions hampered progress.

Attendance has improved against national averages for this year and is now over 90 per cent. Attendance is below national averages and authorised and unauthorised absences are high. Patterns of attendance are being more consistently monitored and analysed; the teachers are challenging pupils when they are late for lessons. Punctuality at the beginning of the day is monitored and persistent offenders are pursued through agreed procedures. A number of pupils still arrive late for lessons.

## **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

### **1: build on improvements made by the new headteacher to improve leadership and management to build a strong focus on raising achievement**

Encouragingly, the headteacher's plans for restructuring the senior management team are well ahead. However, the continuing widespread weaknesses in

leadership and management at the senior and middle tier have meant that the headteacher has shouldered the prime responsibility for managing the wide-ranging improvements tabled in the action plan. This situation is unsatisfactory and progress is limited.

## **2: develop effective procedures to improve teaching and learning, particularly to promote effective and consistent behaviour management**

The senior team and heads of department are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified. The evaluations are accurate but are too infrequent to monitor the improvements required. Currently, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Progress on this issue is limited.

## **3: improve standards and achievement by ensuring all pupils are effectively challenged and enthused by their work**

Too many lessons leave the pupils unchallenged. In these lessons the pupils' individual needs are not met because of poor planning and delivery. Progress is limited.

## **4: ensure that the school's curriculum provides all pupils with equal opportunities to achieve**

The school is changing the upper school curriculum for next year and has plans for a more far-reaching reform thereafter. These plans aim to take full account of the learning needs of the pupils in this school. Strategies for the management of behaviour have produced improvements in the classroom. Progress is reasonable.

## **5: improve pupils' attitudes, attendance and punctuality**

There is improved monitoring of attendance and punctuality and the attendance rate has risen. The pupils are aware that they are expected to arrive at school on time and move briskly between lessons. The staff are challenging the pupils when they are late. Progress is reasonable.

## **6: promote pupils' literacy and numeracy development across all subjects of the curriculum**

Strategies are not yet being implemented effectively. The planning and format of lessons does not yet embrace, sufficiently well, the core need to improve literacy and numeracy. Progress is limited.

**7: ensure that assessment information is used to promote learning more effectively**

Statistics are available and interpreted to construct whole-school targets. Marking is inconsistent and too many pupils do not use individual targets to secure improvement. Progress is limited.

**8: ensure that there is effective management of ICT across the whole school**

The school has enlisted the support of the LEA in the management of ICT across the whole school. The impact and the use of ICT in many subjects is limited. Progress is limited.

**9: enact a strong and effective staff recruitment and retention policy**

Not evaluated on this visit.

**10: ensure that the prospectus and governors' report meet statutory requirements**

Not evaluated on his visit.