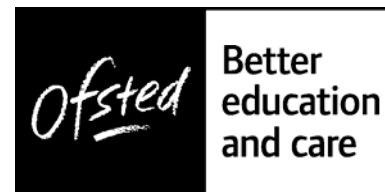


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Mrs A Bever-Warren  
Headteacher  
New Park High School  
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Dear Mrs Bever-Warren

### **Implementation of New Park High School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr M Cladingbowl HMI to your school on 18 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 sixth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: 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 has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and limited progress overall since being subject to special measures.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education and Leisure for Salford. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PARK HIGH SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

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

During the visit, only 12 pupils were on site. Consequently, the inspection took place over one day rather than over two. Seven lessons or parts of lessons and one registration session were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other key staff, the chair of governors, a representative from the LEA, and the consultant headteacher. 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, representatives from the LEA, and the consultant headteacher.

The pupils' standards of attainment in the 2004 National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations were reported on following an earlier visit. In lessons, standards were very low. However, some Year 11 pupils have produced well written and lengthy pieces of English coursework and many of the Year 11 pupils have produced art coursework of very good quality. Much of this art work is displayed around the school; it promotes and celebrates the pupils' achievement very well.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in six of the seven lessons. It was good in two and unsatisfactory in one. Generally, lessons were well planned and nearly all identified suitable learning objectives for the pupils. Most of the teachers and the additional adults showed some skill at managing the behaviour of the pupils. They were patient but quietly insistent, and had high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and work rate. They frequently reminded the pupils of their learning and behavioural objectives and this helped the pupils to manage their own behaviour and consequently to experience some success in lessons. This was particularly notable in the Year 7 and 8 class, where the pupils co-operated with each other and showed pride in their achievements. Many of the teachers have won the respect of their pupils and this has helped to establish a more productive ethos in the school. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the work set was too easy and failed to engage an able pupil's obvious interest in mathematics. Neither learning nor behavioural objectives were referred to, and the pupils' compliance was bought at the expense of high expectations.

The pupils made satisfactory or better progress in only four of the seven lessons. Despite the improvements noted above, in too many lessons the pupils' concentration was sporadic and a sound ethos for learning was established only for a part of the lesson. The pupils' very difficult behaviour and their poor recall of prior learning limited their progress even when they were taught adequately. Rightly, the school recognises that the quality of the teaching needs to be consistently good or better to help the pupils overcome these severe difficulties in order to make adequate progress in lessons.

The pupils' attitude and behaviour were satisfactory or better in only four of the seven lessons. They were good in two and poor in one. Relationships between some pupils were fractious, and disagreements sometimes escalated into threatening and abusive behaviour. A few pupils are still accustomed to walking in and out of lessons at will. Overall, however, the staff demanded more from the pupils and managed their very difficult behaviour more effectively than they did during the previous visit. Consequently, the school was calmer. The number of exclusions remains high but it has begun to fall. Moreover, the number of recorded instances of very poor behaviour has reduced markedly. There were no instances of physical violence seen during the visit.

The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher's positive, thoughtful and determined approach to bringing about improvement has brought a greater coherence to the school's efforts to establish a satisfactory ethos for learning and to improving the quality of the teaching. Most of the other staff are working with a clearer sense of direction and with greater consistency, and morale is steady. Some early decisions taken soon after her appointment in January 2005 have begun to yield benefits. In particular, the reorganisation of teaching groups and rooms, more training for the staff, and alterations to pupils' timetables have resulted in a more orderly ethos throughout the school.

Some progress has been made in improving the management of the school. The school's action plan has been revised, and the updating of a range of policies relating to the day-to-day and strategic management of the school has begun. The assessment co-ordinator and the advanced skills teacher have made steady progress in developing the use of data and in implementing a useful programme of lesson observation.

The governors remain committed to improving the school although vacancies on the governing body remain. The chair is knowledgeable and frank about the school's position; it remains beset by staffing difficulties and only four of the eleven teachers are employed permanently by the school. However, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed to start from 1 September 2005 and a budget deficit recovery plan has been agreed with the LEA.

The LEA has provided considerable support and it has been very well received by the school. It has included timely and effective personnel advice, as well as sustained and sensibly targeted multi-disciplinary assistance from members of the Education Inclusion Service. The LEA has also provided effective support through the consultant headteacher and has agreed to fund an additional deputy headteacher post to further strengthen management in the school. Concerns about health and safety raised by HMI during the last visit have been addressed. Overall, the support provided by the LEA has been good.

## **Action taken to address the key issues**

### **Key Issue 1: improve leadership and management**

The impact of the actions taken to improve leadership and management is reported on above.

Progress is reasonable.

### **Key Issue 2: improve the quality of teaching and learning**

The frequency and quality of lesson observations have improved and consequently the school has a realistic understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning across the school. The weakest teachers have been identified and are receiving suitable support. Following observations, all teachers are given feedback about their strengths and about the areas where further improvement is required, which are then followed up in subsequent lesson observations. Weekly training for all teachers and additional adults has been instrumental in securing greater consistency of practice across the school. Assessment is being used increasingly effectively to set suitably challenging targets for the pupils and to monitor their progress. Very good displays of the pupils' work help to promote a positive ethos for learning.

Progress is reasonable.

### **Key Issue 3: improve the pupils' attitudes and behaviour**

All Year 7 and Year 8 pupils have been taught in their own room for over a term and this has reduced opportunities for misbehaviour and given the pupils a greater sense of ownership and responsibility. Sensibly, this strategy has been extended to include all years and is beginning to reap benefits. A more consistent approach to managing the behaviour of the pupils is being applied throughout the school, primarily through constant and unambiguous references to the pupils' learning and behaviour targets. This is building the pupils' confidence in themselves as learners as they, in turn, develop more positive attitudes to learning. Training for staff in physical intervention has given the staff greater confidence in handling difficult situations and the need for physical intervention has decreased.

At 68 per cent, the pupils' rate of attendance so far this year remains very low although it has improved markedly for most of the pupils on individual support packages and since 1 April 2005 the overall rate of attendance has improved to 75 per cent.

Progress is reasonable.

## **Key Issue 4: develop the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils**

A reduction in the length of individual lessons and the reorganisation of the school day has helped enhance the pupils' experience of school, and individual support and curriculum packages have been negotiated for Year 11 pupils. However, there is no agreed formal curriculum development plan and some pupils are not receiving full-time education.

Progress is limited.