

28th September 2005

Ms K Rush  
Headteacher  
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Ratby Road  
Groby  
Leicestershire  
LE6 0FP

Dear Ms Rush

**SCHOOLS WHERE THE PUPILS' BEHAVIOUR HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CONCERN BY INSPECTION: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BROOKVALE HIGH SCHOOL**

**Introduction**

Following my visit with Mrs V Greatrex, additional inspector, to your school on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was a first monitoring inspection as part of the programme of visits to schools where the pupils' behaviour has been identified as a concern by inspection.

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**Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, members of the senior management team, nominated middle managers and groups of pupils. During the visit 22 lessons or parts of lessons, three registration sessions and one assembly were inspected.

**Context**

The school's context has not changed significantly since the last inspection in December 2004. However, despite a number of recent appointments and several members of staff returning to work, the school continues to face problems with staff recruitment.

## **Achievement and standards**

Standards of attainment in end of Key Stage 3 national tests have been well above average in recent years reflecting the school's favourable catchment area and the pupils' high levels of attainment on entry. When compared with the previous year unvalidated results in the most recent tests in 2005 showed a slight decline in English, but increases in mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in lessons and over time.

## **Personal development and well-being**

There has been significant improvement in the pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Around the school and during break periods the pupils interacted well and were courteous and friendly towards visitors. Despite congestion in corridors most moved sensibly and purposefully between lessons. During assembly the pupils behaved very well. In lessons most pupils were very well behaved and had positive attitudes to learning. The vast majority settled quickly, followed instructions, worked steadily, and took considerable care with their work. Even in those lessons where the pace of learning was slow the pupils were patient and compliant. However, many pupils were rather passive and only responded positively when teaching was lively and interesting. Moreover, there remains a small number of pupils whose attitudes and behaviour present a challenge, particularly when the pace of learning is too pedestrian.

Since the last inspection the school has suitably reviewed and revised its system of rewards and sanctions. The pupils understand the procedures of stepped sanctions and feel that their consistent application has improved the climate for learning. This approach, alongside improvements in the quality of teaching, has led to a significant reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour. Positive praise and good relationships are effective in motivating the pupils to work hard, and many pupils, notably in Years 7 and 8, respond positively to the lure of rewards.

The school exploits a few opportunities to foster the pupils' responsibilities but these are underdeveloped. Most pupils spoke positively about the school: they feel safe and enjoy learning. However, several older pupils felt that there are too few wider enrichment opportunities. Attendance is well above the national median.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in December 2004:

- improve the pupils' behaviour and establish a culture of greater endeavour – good progress.

## **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 21 lessons, including five that were good and six outstanding. One lesson was inadequate. In general, lessons were well planned and prepared with a good range of varied learning activities. The pupils were well managed and work was suitably guided by learning objectives that were shared with the class. There is a core of teaching that is consistently good, with some that is outstanding. In the outstanding lessons teaching was lively, energetic and engaging and there were excellent relationships. In these lessons the teachers were able to sustain a rapid pace by skilful questioning and cleverly planned activities. Nonetheless some weaknesses remain even in lessons that were satisfactory overall. For example, too much work lacked sufficient pace, some was dull, and in general insufficient use was made of attainment data to challenge all pupils in each class. In one lesson the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils was ineffectively managed.

The quality of learning correlated very closely with that of teaching and was good overall. In general the pupils make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress in lessons. In the best lessons the pupils made rapid gains. However, there remains too much variability in the pupils' rates of progress within, and between, lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has responded positively to the findings of the last inspection and has galvanised the senior management team to address the issues raised. After appropriate consultation, improvements have been implemented across a range of provision. For example, the systems of rewards and sanctions have been revised; the tutor system has been completely overhauled; setting arrangements have been modified; lesson routines agreed; parents have been involved more closely; and a programme of behaviour management training for all staff has been planned. All these changes have been successful in raising the awareness of all staff and in establishing greater consistency. In addition, the school has focused sensibly on strengthening the quality of teaching in order to promote positive attitudes. This has helped to improve the quality of learning and to increase the pupils' progress.

Despite these improvements the systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are not sufficiently robust or rigorous. The senior management team has a broad overview of the strengths and weaknesses in provision but not the specific areas for improvement. There are no effective procedures for sharing the outstanding practice that exists in the school. Subject leaders are keen to improve provision but too much is left to individual departments. Self evaluation by senior and middle managers is underdeveloped.

## **External support**

The local education authority (LEA) has provided suitable support and guidance for the school and has responded to its needs by providing a structured programme of training for all staff.

## **Main Judgements**

The school has made good progress and has the capacity to make further improvement.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Further strengthen the quality of teaching.
- Make effective use of attainment data in order to better meet the needs of all pupils.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Leicestershire.

Yours sincerely

**Paul Brooker**  
**HM Inspector of Schools**