



04 December 2006

Mr Stephen Smith
The Headteacher
Eastbrook Comprehensive School
Dagenham Road
Dagenham
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Dear Mr Smith

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF EASTBROOK COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Roger Whittaker, Additional Inspector, Stuart Charlton, Additional Inspector, Alan Brewerton, Additional Inspector, Cyndi Millband, Additional Inspector, and Kay Johnson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 23 and 24 November 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2005.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, representatives from the local authority (LA), the deputy headteachers, heads of year and other school staff.

Context

The headteacher began this school year with many new senior colleagues, including three new deputy headteachers.

Achievement and standards

The GCSE results in June 2006 showed no improvement over those for 2005 and did not match the improvements in the Key Stage 3 tests noted at the last monitoring visit. Only 44% of pupils gained 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSEs. This is well below the national average and inadequate. Most pupils started in the school having achieved at least satisfactory standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and the progress pupils made places it in the lowest quartile nationally and in a lower position than last year (2005).

The new seconded deputy has galvanised other colleagues into action and the school now has established suitable systems for tracking individual pupils' progress. Staff can now more accurately identify those who need extra help and support. However, this information is not yet being used fully by all teachers to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

Progress on the areas identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Develop the process for monitoring pupils' academic progress so that they can be set challenging targets for improvement - satisfactory progress this term.

Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Sixth Form

The provision has improved and is now satisfactory. Achievement is at least satisfactory and the school has continued to build on the strengths identified at the monitoring visit in February 2006. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are much better than in the school as a whole and the five lessons observed on the visit were good. The new deputy headteacher responsible has a clear view about how the provision needs to develop and she has won the confidence of the sixth form team. Some new courses have been offered this year, although the move to offering more vocational courses has been too slow.

Progress on the areas identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Ensure that post-16 provision adequately provides for the needs of students - satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

At the previous visit behaviour was found to be satisfactory but it has deteriorated significantly this term and is now inadequate.

Behaviour observed in classes and in the corridors and playground is poor and declining rapidly. In many lessons there was an undercurrent of disaffection which resulted in significant groups of pupils chatting or calling out. Too many pupils were not interested in the lessons. In the unsatisfactory lessons, inspectors observed pupils chewing, listening to personal music systems and sending and receiving texts on a regular basis in all year groups. Pupils were in the corridors causing disruption during lessons and between classes at changeover. There are unacceptable levels of poor behaviour and many pupils are openly defiant, for example they leave school at lunchtime without permission walking past staff on the gates, and their actions are not challenged. Even the youngest pupils show scant regard for their uniform. There is also an unacceptable level of assaults on staff and pupils.

The lack of appropriate lunchtime arrangements leads to further disruptive behaviour. The second break is short and is not perceived as lunchtime. Some pupils walk around with food and others choose not to eat at all. One pupil said, "We don't do lunch at this school". This lack of an adequate lunch time limits the opportunities for building positive relationships. This issue was raised in the first monitoring letter and has still not been addressed.

The lack of a coordinated and consistent approach to behaviour management has led to the deterioration of behaviour. Establishing a coherent behaviour policy has been a priority for some time but there is little evidence of its implementation.

The deputy headteacher responsible has used the recording systems for behavioural issues to reported concerns to the senior leadership team with useful suggestions for improvements. Too little action has been taken, because, despite the evidence to the contrary, the headteacher does not maintain that behaviour is a cause for significant concern.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has deteriorated since the last visit. 59 lessons were observed at this visit and one third was unsatisfactory. Poor, disruptive behaviour noticeably undermined the quality of teaching and learning. In the unsatisfactory lessons there was a lack of pace and challenge; they were dull, and predominantly teacher led.

These depressing figures mask significant improvements, for instance, in those lessons taught by teachers who are being coached. They are now amongst the school's most effective teachers. Pupils say of these lessons 'They are more interesting and fun this year, the teacher makes everyone

have a go.' When asked if they had noticed any differences pupils commented, 'It's supposed to be harder this year but she teaches you in ways that help you to learn.' Although at an early stage, the London Challenge programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning is also beginning to have an impact on the weakest teaching.

The curriculum development group, led by two of the new deputy head teachers, has continued to make progress in providing a curriculum that is more appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities. They have used the information collected, through an audit, to introduce additional vocational courses in Year 10. The planned BTEC food technology course now offers students an opportunity to work towards accreditation which better suits their needs. The 'flexi-learning' alternative curriculum started in 2005 in Year 10 has continued and increased in numbers as the school recognises the need to broaden criteria for entry. Good plans to amend groupings in Year 7, in order to better match the curriculum to individual needs, were proposed early in the term but the headteacher has failed to act on these proposals swiftly enough.

The curriculum for personal and social education is unsatisfactory. Many pupils see it as an extension of registration and the quality of delivery is very variable. This contributes to the inadequate behaviour and lack of respect for others, which has a negative affect on the students' ability to learn.

Progress on the areas identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Provide a curriculum that is appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities and gives them more planned opportunities to develop spiritual and cultural awareness - satisfactory progress in improving the curriculum.
- Ensure that post-16 provision adequately provides for the needs of students - satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Great hopes for improvements were expressed last term on the appointment of three new deputy heads and they have not disappointed. They have grasped their responsibilities with great energy and enthusiasm. Actions focused on the areas for improvements have been taken and they have ensured that satisfactory progress has been made in most of these areas. A suitable action and improvement plan is now in place and a good start has been made on establishing more rigorous self-evaluation. However, as these areas improve other aspects of the school deteriorate because of inadequacies in the leadership of the headteacher. He has not responded to the sensible proposals made by others to ensure that the identified serious

weaknesses are addressed quickly enough. He has lost the confidence of staff. Low standards and achievement, inadequate teaching, and the concerns of a significant number of staff have not been addressed.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Increase the rigor of self evaluation so that all managers understand how to use the information from monitoring to raise pupils' achievement - satisfactory progress.

External support

The LA, with the support of London Challenge, is now much better placed to hold the school to account. It has supported the school with an experienced seconded deputy head, who is already taking a lead and winning the confidence of staff. The monitoring and review groups, chaired by the LA are rigorously evaluating the impact of the support to the school. The support from the consultant headteacher, advisers and specialist support staff is well co-ordinated. The dedicated human resources support is effective in dealing with the most problematic personnel issues. However, more action is needed to ensure proposals for improvement can be actioned urgently.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Swift and urgent action to improve behaviour through ensuring all staff are consistent in their practice.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director for Education, Arts & Libraries, Barking and Dagenham.

Yours sincerely

Ann Berger
H M Inspector