



08 February 2007

Mr Mark Keary
The Headteacher
Bethnal Green Technology College
Gosset Street
Bethnal Green
London
E2 6NW

Dear Mr Keary

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BETHNAL GREEN TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Introduction

Following my visit with Sheila Nolan, Additional Inspector and William Geoffrey Robson, Additional Inspector to your school on 30 and 31 January 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 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 and other teachers, groups of pupils, and a representative from the local authority (LA).

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last visit. The visit took place only seven teaching weeks after the last visit.

Achievement and standards

Standards and achievement in examinations in 2006 were reported in detail in previous monitoring letters. Teachers' assessments show that students are on track to gain better grades at GCSE in 2007. In Year 9, they show that standards are improving in English and science but the rate of progress is slower in mathematics. However, teachers' own assessments are not always secure enough to ensure the validity of these predictions.

Progress continues to be closely related to the quality of teaching and the use that teachers make of assessment data. Teachers are becoming more aware of students' individual levels of attainment. This is especially the case for students with learning difficulties and with English as an additional language. In the best lessons teachers use this awareness well to plan work that challenges students at all levels of attainment. However, such use of information remains inconsistent.

Progress on the areas of improvement identified by the inspection in October 2005:

- Raise standards of student achievement – satisfactory progress

Personal development and well-being

Although the aspect was not a focus for this visit, it is clear that the positive transformation seen at the time of the last monitoring visit has been maintained. Harmonious relationships among students and between staff and students are evident. Students are now involved in decision making through the school council and as governors.

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

- Raise standards of student behaviour and offer a more harmonious and cohesive community for all students – good progress

Quality of provision

The school has successfully maintained the quality of teaching found at the last monitoring inspection. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the proportion of outstanding, good and unsatisfactory teaching observed was similar to that reported by the school. Recent training activities have focused on classroom

assessment practice and on creativity in the classroom. There are positive indications that these activities are beginning to have an impact in some lessons in some subject areas. Advanced skills teachers working closely with individual teachers and within departments, such as English, science and humanities, have also contributed well to developing teaching and learning.

Knowledgeable and energetic teaching characterises most classrooms. Almost all teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and working relationships are good so that pupils want to co-operate with staff. Generally, teachers' questioning has improved so that it is more often used effectively to check pupils' understanding of class work. Group and paired work is better used to encourage pupils to articulate their findings and explain answers. Encouraging attempts to use information and communication technology resources effectively in some lessons are sometimes hampered by too few resources.

Although teachers plan lessons conscientiously, too often insufficient attention is given to defining learning outcomes clearly enough. Thus, useful strategies to assess learning in lessons are often lacking. In other lessons, pupils in need of support are regularly identified but there are few attempts to match work to individual targets or to alter methods that do not promote learning successfully.

There remains much inconsistency in how effectively teachers use the data currently available to plan lessons. Departmental expectations of day-to-day recording of pupils' progress are also inconsistent so that individual teachers' records do not clearly show how planning draws on previous learning.

Marking remains unsatisfactory overall. There are pockets of good practice for example in English, but in too many classes, despite departmental monitoring activities, pupils' work is marked irregularly. Diagnostic comments to help pupils improve work are rare and little marking relates to pupils' targets. Although pupils often know their target grades, they are less clear as to how current work relates to these targets.

Identification and assessment of the needs of students with learning difficulties and English as an additional language have improved. However, there are insufficient teaching assistants to provide support for these students. The induction programme for students at an early stage of language acquisition enables them to make good progress when they first

attend the school. Teachers are beginning to use assessment data to set targets for students but monitoring of their progress is not frequent enough.

The school has worked very hard to improve the care of students. Procedures for ensuring child protection are secure.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils, especially those who need support and those who require greater challenge – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction which focuses on raising standards and achievement. He is well supported by an effective leadership team. Together they are developing a culture of self-evaluation which has been shared with subject managers and individual teaching staff. This has resulted in each subject and year leader producing a self-evaluation form, but the quality, self-criticism and accuracy varies considerably.

The senior leadership team is still relatively new and initiatives such as 'assessment for learning' are at an early stage of development.

There remain inconsistencies in middle leadership. For example in the mathematics department monitoring has failed to ensure regular marking.

The identification of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is much improved but their support lacks resources.

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

- Leaders and managers need to recognise urgently the weaknesses and identify the immediate priorities and direction for the school – satisfactory progress
- Produce a clear action plan for improvement, the success of which can be measured and evaluated – good progress

External support

The LA continues to provide a range of support. Since the last visit this has been enhanced by considerable support from London Challenge, such as the funding of coaching by experts in teaching and learning. This support is

effective in improving the quality of lessons delivered by a small group of teachers but there has been insufficient time to see the impact on the whole school. The LA is committed to continuing to support the school until and beyond its removal from special measures.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Priorities for further improvement

- Increasing the proportion of lessons that are at least good
- Using data to more consistently raise achievement and identify underachievement

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
H M Inspector