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Mr Sean McGrath
The Headteacher
The Royal Docks Community School
Prince Regent Lane
Custom House, London
E16 3HS

Dear Mr McGrath

Ofsted Monitoring of Schools with Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 6 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

I would like to particularly thank the students who talked to me both informally and formally during the day. They are clearly supportive of the school and have a perceptive understanding of its progress and their role in it. I was particularly struck by one comment that 'the spirit of learning is greater now'.

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.

As a result of the inspection in November 2006, the school was asked to:

- Improve behaviour
- Raise standards by improving attendance and reducing the proportion of inadequate teaching
- Use data to identify underachievement more consistently and raise standards.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievements. The strong leadership of the headteacher, supported by improvements in the monitoring of both student progress and teaching and learning, is beginning to steer the school in the right direction.

Behaviour in corridors and around the school is often good. No examples of dangerous or violent behaviour were seen during this visit. Students are polite and courteous to visitors. Any poor behaviour is challenged effectively by staff, and students respond appropriately. Students themselves report that behaviour outside of classrooms has improved since the last inspection. They say they now feel much

safer in school. They are very supportive of the stricter enforcement of the rules on attendance, punctuality and uniform, but also note that this is not yet consistently applied. However, they report that poor behaviour still disrupts some lessons and their ability to learn. They display a keen understanding of their roles and responsibilities in this area. Behaviour is good when teaching is interesting and well-matched to the needs and interests of students. More needs to be done to enhance the quality of teaching to ensure that behaviour in the classroom improves further. Overall, there has been satisfactory progress in improving behaviour.

There has been a concerted effort to improve attendance. A good range of strategies has been employed since the beginning of this academic year which have had a notable impact. The school is on course to meet its agreed target, which will be above the national average, but below the local level.

Teaching and learning are now monitored well. There are good systems in place and members of the senior leadership team regularly observe lessons. The deputy headteacher responsible for teaching and learning has an accurate and astute knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses across the school. The proportion of inadequate teaching has reduced since the last inspection to around a tenth, and about two thirds is satisfactory. This means that there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all students make the progress they are capable of. The expectations of some teachers are too low and they do not provide enough challenge, especially for the more able. Students report that they would like more interesting lessons and appreciate firm, even strict, control from teachers. The senior leadership team has a firm grasp of these issues and good plans to make further improvements.

The school has put in place a good range of systems to collect and analyse data on student achievement. The senior leadership team now regularly monitors achievement through its 'Progress Board' meetings. It has set ambitious targets this year which, if achieved, would put it amongst the top 25% of all schools for student progress. Standards at Key Stage 3 are difficult to gauge as the school is currently dealing with some difficulties over the mathematics examination, which may have a negative impact on results. The school provided convincing evidence that achievement in English is on an upward trend and looks likely to be better than last year. Monitoring of student progress in the science department is not as well developed, and the tracking data does not show convincing evidence of improvement. At Key Stage 4 the school looks likely to achieve comparable 5 A*-C results to last year. This would be satisfactory achievement and sustain last years' improvement. The school's data suggest that GCSE results in English and mathematics will improve slightly. Results in science look likely to show only a modest improvement on last years' outcomes, which would again be inadequate progress.

The local authority has provided good, regular support and challenge. Their monitoring is accurate and has made a strong contribution to the school's progress. There has been effective use of consultancy support, particularly in English. It will be

important that this support continues and focuses tightly on improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in science.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Lynes
Her Majesty's Inspector