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19 November 2007

Mr Paul Leonard
The Headteacher
Chiltern Edge Community School
Reades Lane
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Dear Mr Leonard

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 November 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the two groups of students who came to talk to me, to the two teachers whose lessons I observed, and to the teachers, teaching assistants and chair of governors with whom I had discussions. I also met with a representative of the local authority (LA).

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 March 2007, the school was asked to raise achievement at Key Stage 4, match teaching to the needs of all groups of learners, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities and the more able, and raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.

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' achievement.

The GCSE results for 2007 show that in most subjects the students' achievement has improved. While the full analysis of the data has still to be completed, the figures currently available show that progress during Key Stage 4 for these students was around average, though overall progress across Key Stages 3 and 4 was still below average. The school's tracking data for the students currently in Key Stage 4 indicate that the improvements made in 2007 are likely to be continued in future years. However, the school is aware that in some examination subjects, notably art graphics, resistant materials and physical education, results are too low and as yet show no signs of improving. In addition, the 2007 results do not show improvement

in progress by students with learning difficulties or disabilities and this remains a weakness.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved. The students report that lessons are more interesting and engaging, with a better structure and with more practical activities. As a result, behaviour in lessons is better, enabling all students to get on with their learning. The recently installed interactive whiteboards are being used effectively, allowing the teachers to spend more time in discussion with students. As one Year 11 student remarked, 'The teaching in lessons is better because the teachers actually work with you instead of just telling you.'

The school has recently adopted a common format for planning lessons and this is helpful in making sure that teachers consider the needs of all groups of learners. Teachers now give students a clear indication of the level at which they are performing and what they need to do to improve. This not only helps the teachers to match the work more closely to the students' levels of attainment but also motivates the students: as another Year 11 student commented, 'You know what you have got to do to get your grade up.'

The teachers' expectations of what students can achieve have risen. Higher attaining pupils speak positively of the extra challenges they are given, for example in science, maths, history and geography. While there have been some changes in the support given to students with learning difficulties or disabilities, this important area is in urgent need of further improvement so that their achievement can be raised.

The LA has given valuable support in the improvement of teaching and learning, and towards raising achievement at Key Stage 4. An LA audit of the provision for special educational needs (SEN) last May identified weaknesses and a supported school review in October pointed out that improvements in SEN provision have not been sufficiently rapid. The LA will need to support more effective steps to raise the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Schenk
Her Majesty's Inspector