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Mr C Tomlinson  
Headteacher  
Chafford Hundred Business and Enterprise College  
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Dear Mr Tomlinson

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 10 January 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am grateful to the staff, governors and students that I spoke to during my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 30 April 2007, the school was asked to

- raise standards of attainment and achievement, particularly in science and English
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring it consistently meets the needs of all students and challenges them
- improve the quality of performance information and the rigour and robustness of monitoring and evaluation by governors and managers
- improve the effectiveness of middle managers
- ensure governors and managers carry out their statutory responsibilities for health and safety.

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 students' achievement.

GCSE results improved significantly in 2007 and were average. English results in particular improved markedly but remained below average. Mathematics results were above average but science results remained low. The progress that GCSE students made overall improved significantly and was average. Year 9 test results declined in mathematics and slightly in English, but improved a little in science. Students' progress through Key Stage 3 remained similar to the previous year. The school met its targets for GCSE but not for Key Stage 3. Recent assessment data indicate that standards have risen this year in Key Stage 3 and in English at Key Stage 4. The

improvements are due to better teaching, regular tracking of progress, guidance and support to students. In science, teaching has benefited from new appointments and much support; students report that lessons have improved since the start of the school year. However, standards in science could remain a concern at the next inspection. The school is correctly reviewing its integrated Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum.

There has been a systematic approach to improving teaching. Senior and middle managers observe lessons regularly and use the outcomes to identify improvements needed and provide constructive feedback. Teachers whose performance is weaker are supported and their progress monitored. The programme has significantly reduced the amount of inadequate teaching, but the school is aware that it still needs to increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching.

Performance information is used more widely. Assessment data is used regularly by teachers, learning guides and managers. Students are generally aware of their targets and current levels. Monitoring and evaluation are more systematic. Middle managers monitor standards and provision according to a regular programme and report to senior managers. This produces useful information and has sharpened management, but the school lacks well organised records of the processes and outcomes.

The effectiveness of middle managers has improved through clearer expectations of their role, support and training, and regular accountability to senior managers. Subject leaders feel well supported, although the line management structure lacks some clarity. They are gaining experience and undertake a full range of planning and self-evaluation. The science department currently has no head of department, but is managed competently on a temporary basis by two teachers with the close support of an assistant headteacher.

Governors have undertaken considerable training and now understand their statutory responsibilities. Health and safety procedures are implemented and monitored properly. Governors are increasingly holding the school to account through meeting managers to discuss self-evaluation. The school has improved its budget management. It has undertaken a curriculum review as a first step in a more strategic approach to financial management but has yet to turn this into a three-year budget forecast.

The school's specialist status has a positive impact. The specialist subjects of business studies and mathematics perform well at GCSE and practice in these subjects is used to inform other teachers. Strong provision for work-related learning gives students an understanding of the skills and attitudes they need for work.

The local authority has provided effective support in improving teaching and developing the skills of senior and middle managers. It has supported governors in developing their expertise although it was unable to provide additional specialist governors after the inspection as it planned to do. The local authority's action plan provides adequate detail and accountability, but lacks precision in a few respects.

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

Yours sincerely

John Godwood  
Additional Inspector