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27 February 2008

Mrs Lynn Key  
The Acting Headteacher  
Burwood School  
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Orpington  
BR6 9BD

Dear Mrs Key

#### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF BURWOOD SCHOOL

Following my visit to your school on 12 and 13 February 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education & Libraries for Bromley.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stuart Charlton  
Additional Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF BURWOOD SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 12 and 13 February 2008

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher and senior leadership team, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and representatives from the Local Authority (LA). At this first visit all aspects of the school's work were considered, but standards and achievement were not investigated in detail.

### Context

Since the Section 5 inspection in September 2007, the headteacher has been absent on extended leave due to sickness and the substantive deputy headteacher has been appointed as acting headteacher. The assistant headteacher at the time of the inspection has been appointed as acting deputy headteacher and the persons who were key stage coordinators have been appointed as acting assistant headteachers. These people now form the school's senior leadership team. It is not clear for how long these acting appointments will be in place. There have also been changes in the governing body with the appointment of a new chair and several other experienced governors. The LA has established a monitoring group that meets on a weekly basis to monitor and review the school's progress and report on the implementation of the school's action plan and its impact.

### Achievement and standards

The September 2007 inspection report judged pupils' progress to be inadequate and this has not improved. The new senior leadership team has quickly implemented a system to track pupils' progress and to set targets that are motivating and challenging. These targets are not yet used sufficiently regularly or consistently to ensure that pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable.

### Personal development and well-being

Members of the senior leadership team have quickly given a very clear focus on the need to improve pupils' attitudes to their learning. They have established a robust behaviour management policy that is beginning to have a beneficial impact, particularly on behaviour in lessons. However, they are well aware that behaviour around school at break times and at lunchtime does not meet their expectations. Good behaviour was seen with a group of Year 10 and 11 boys on a work experience project at a local archaeological dig. However, too many pupils are still not aware of what is expected of them in managing their own behaviour. The school now has good systems to track and monitor attendance. Linked to the recently introduced rewards system, these have already had a significant impact on raising attendance. For example, the number of students with 100% attendance over the term has increased tenfold. Changes to the curriculum have contributed significantly to increasing pupils' enjoyment of their lessons and is another factor in their improved

attendance. The school now has good systems in place to ensure the safety of pupils and meets its statutory requirements. Pupils speak very positively about these changes and particularly appreciate the reduction in bullying and racial incidents. However, there is still some way to go to embed these changes into the ethos of the school, raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence and improve their behaviour.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2007:

- Establish effective systems to improve attendance and deal with bullying and racist acts – satisfactory

### Quality of provision

The senior leadership team has implemented several radical curriculum changes, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11. These have centred around the introduction of vocational and work-related programmes which are highly valued by pupils. More revisions are planned for the summer term to bring the curriculum for younger pupils into line with these changes. However, much work remains to be done to develop this move to a skills-based curriculum and incorporate it into teachers' planning and appropriate accreditation arrangements.

The school has made a good start in establishing rigorous and robust systems to monitor teaching and learning and identify the support that all staff need to develop their practice. A plan of action has been drawn up which identifies the support needed from the LA as well as from other agencies. Good links with neighbouring mainstream and special schools have already been established which are paying dividends in supporting the senior managers and helping staff to identify and develop good practice. As yet, these have not had sufficient impact on reducing the amount of teaching which is inadequate and improving the amount which is good and better.

Staff help and support pupils at all times and their efforts are now being more successfully focused as the school implements and embeds new policies for attendance and behaviour. However, there are occasions in breakfast club, at break and lunchtimes when they do not interact sufficiently purposefully with pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The previous report identified problems caused by persistent non-attenders these are being successfully addressed with the help and support of the LA and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2007:

- Develop the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of learners of all ages – satisfactory
- Develop suitable induction, professional development and support for staff to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning – inadequate

### Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has a very clear vision of how the school should develop. She has quickly brought together a strong senior leadership team who share her vision and commitment to make it happen. There are now good systems in place to

monitor pupils' progress and set challenging targets. Equally good systems have been established to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision, particularly the quality of teaching and learning. Already these have given senior managers an accurate view of the school's strengths and weakness against which improvement can be judged. The governing body has been significantly strengthened by the appointment of a new chair, several well-experienced governors and of particular significance, four parent governors. This has given new impetus to the monitoring role of the governing body and put it in a position where it can begin to act effectively as a critical friend to the school. The LA has been very supportive in enabling these changes to be enacted and has implemented a very useful weekly meeting to monitor the implementation of the school's action plan. However, because these changes are so recent they have not been sufficiently well communicated to staff, parents and other stakeholders for them to fully appreciate the improvements which have been made and set the context within which the school can pursue its agenda for change. Of greater significance, is that the improvements are only just beginning to affect pupils' attitudes to their learning by raising their confidence and self-esteem.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2007:

- Increase its capacity to improve by establishing high quality leadership – satisfactory
- Devise and implement the systems and practices needed to monitor, evaluate and assure the effectiveness of its work – satisfactory
- Improve its partnerships with parents, the LA, external agencies and the community – satisfactory

### External support

The LA's original statement of action was judged to require revision and at the visit a thoroughly amended plan was submitted. This is a much more effective document to support the development of the school. It provides a good context within which the school can move forward, albeit with some constraints imposed by external circumstances which the LA is making strenuous efforts to resolve. The support which has been provided since December 2007 through the revised statement of action has been effective in helping the school, and in particular the senior leadership team, to gain the confidence needed to move forward.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all policies, particularly those related to behaviour, are rigorously applied by all staff to raise the confidence and self-esteem of pupils and improve their attitudes to learning.
- Eliminate teaching which is inadequate and increase the amount which is good and better to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Secure the changes made to the senior leadership team to enable it to consolidate the pace of improvement which has been set.