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4 March 2008

Mr Ian Storey
The Principal
Stockley Academy
Park View Road
Hillingdon
Middlesex
UB8 3GA

Dear Mr Storey,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your academy on 25 February 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please do extend my thanks to the managers and the chair of governors, and in particular, the students who gave up their time to speak with me.

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 on 17-18 January 2007, the academy was asked to

- Raise standards
- Improve the proportion of teaching that is good or better
- Improve attendance
- Improve the sixth form curriculum so that it meets more precisely the needs and interests of the students

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the academy is making inadequate progress. However, since the arrival of the new principal the academy has good strategic capacity to improve. Since the last inspection the academy has increased attendance and strengthened the sixth form curriculum. Results at GCSE in 2007 showed improvement, notably in the proportion of students achieving at least five A*-C grades, however, the progress students made between Year 7 and 11 declined in 2007 from the previous year. In English and maths, students' progress has noticeably improved. Nevertheless, students' behaviour has worsened significantly and the academy has made inadequate progress in improving the quality of teaching. This visit has therefore raised serious concerns and I am recommending a return visit.

The academy should send a short report to the lead inspector outlining the actions they have taken to improve the students' behaviour and the impact they have had. This report should be received within 20 working days of the end of this monitoring inspection. This report will inform the timing of the return visit.

The principal took up post in May 2007. His clear strategic vision and determination to increase attendance improve teaching and raise standards, have resulted in a restructuring of the senior and middle management team. However, the senior management team is not functioning to full capacity; owing to two new assistant principals who will not take up post until April 2008. Middle managers have not had the necessary professional development to enable them to take on greater responsibilities and this has been rightly identified as an urgent action point. This has had an adverse impact on the management of students' behaviour in and out of classes. The academy has a specialism in science and technology and is having difficulties in recruitment of appropriately qualified staff, in particular, for mathematics and science. Consequently, students' learning and progress have been significantly disrupted owing to the regular use of supply teachers in these, and other subjects.

The academy's improvement plan has rightly listed broad actions and long term objectives needed to address its weaknesses. However, the mid-term objectives and success criteria have not been identified and shared with staff, especially in relation to the link between the quality of teaching and the rate of progress students make. Internal monitoring of lessons has taken place but there has not been an evaluation of the features of teaching and learning that help students make progress, and no specific actions are in place to share good practice. The issues of underachievement and poor behaviour are exacerbated by the fact that too much teaching is either just satisfactory or inadequate. Many lessons do not sufficiently engage students in their learning and a significant number of students do not make the progress they should, whilst others have their learning disrupted by the noisy behaviour of their peers. Outside of lessons, the behaviour of students is poor. The newly introduced code of behaviour is not yet well established, as there is insufficient monitoring of students' movements between lessons. However, the recently introduced seclusion unit has been successful in reducing exclusions this year.

The percentage of students who gained at least five A*-C grades in the 2007 GCSE examinations increased from the previous year, but standards remain very low. The academy has responded by setting up additional revision sessions to support students as they prepare for their exams. However, it is incumbent on students to attend if they wish. Assessment practice is inconsistent across the subjects and most teachers do not use the information they have on students' prior attainment to inform their lesson planning. Based on current in year data, it is projected that GCSE results for 2008 will improve, but these are unlikely to equate to satisfactory progress in all areas, especially in science and for girls, who make less progress than do boys.

The academy is raising standards through expanding the Key Stage 4 curriculum to include more vocational provision, such as construction, hair and beauty and health and social care. Students now take courses better suited to their needs and abilities. Likewise, organising English classes into ability sets in some year groups is helping to

better match teaching to the range of students' needs. The sixth form curriculum has expanded to include more Level 2 and 3 provision; a decision has been taken not to extend the Level 1 provision and the academy is preparing to deliver the Diploma in information and communication technology in September 2008 as part of the local area 14-19 offer. Progression from Year 11 to Year 12 has improved so that the sixth form is increasing its numbers and more students are also being retained from Year 12 to 13. The number of students applying successfully to university has increased.

Appropriate steps have been taken to develop students' literacy skills, for those students identified with low reading ages. There is some evidence that these are having a positive impact, but not on a scale to significantly improve these skills across all areas of the curriculum. The capacity of learning support staff to successfully tackle the literacy and language needs of students in lessons is severely limited, as the academy is currently understaffed.

Low attendance is being successfully addressed through the work of the academy's attendance officer and through the closer involvement of parents. However, raising students' attendance remains a challenge, especially in Year 11 where low attendance rates and non-attendance to examinations endanger students' potential success. Nevertheless, attendance figures have improved this year and the academy senior leadership team is working on extending strategies to include the use of rewards.

The leadership team, including the governors, have made a very sound start in defining a clear strategic and operational direction for the academy. However, changes in staffing and recruitment difficulties at all levels have seriously hampered progress in addressing poor behaviour and the weaker teaching, which results in low standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector