

29 April 2008

Mr L Nolan  
The Headteacher  
Perry Beeches School  
Beeches Road  
Great Barr  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
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Dear Mr Nolan

### 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 17 April 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am also grateful to Ms L Charles, parent governor, to the group of students who spoke to me, and to Ms L Cork, the representative from the local authority.

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 19 and 20 September 2007, the school was asked to:

- raise standards and achievement by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4
- improve the quality of teaching and learning through better use of assessment information
- ensure that lesson planning and delivery matches the ability level of students
- develop consistent leadership roles at all levels to ensure performance is monitored regularly and timely action is taken
- strengthen governance to ensure that the school meets challenging performance targets.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The school is taking effective action in ensuring that achievement and standards continue to rise. There has been an unrelenting effort to improve standards and the school has already surpassed its 2007 GCSE results. In January 2008, 53% of Year 11 students gained at least a GCSE grade 'C' in English and all Year 11 students have already gained at least one grade A\* to G. There has been a significant increase in

the GCSE coursework grades. Much emphasis and hard work have been placed since summer 2007 on improving, in the first instance, the school's Key Stage 4 results. At Key Stage 3, internal data indicates that the school is working well towards achieving its targets.

A significant factor in the above has been the improvement in the teaching. The school and local authority judge teaching to be at least satisfactory, with a sizeable proportion that is good. Inspection evidence supports this judgement. Teachers work hard, are well prepared, and routinely share learning objectives with the class. The pace to the questioning is usually brisk, teachers have realistically high expectations and the students respond well to these. The students' behaviour is excellent. A common thread running through lessons, and which was apparent in the in-depth discussion with a group of students, is how well they know which levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve their work. This is a result of much hard work in improving assessment and target setting systems which are now good. The staff have a good range of information about the prior attainment of the students and they use this well to extend the challenge offered to them. Across the school, senior leaders have good systems in place to track the progress of students and quickly identify those who are underachieving. Appropriate action is then taken, including the recent appointment of four learning mentors to work intensively with 67 students.

The headteacher has an unwavering commitment to improving standards and provision for all students. His strong leadership has revitalised the school. He and the senior leadership team work well together and they have a shared vision of school improvement. Important changes have taken place in school since the last inspection. Eighteen new staff have been appointed since September 2007, staff morale is high, and the students report that there is a significant improvement in behaviour. Middle leaders are being empowered to take greater responsibility and some, especially in the school's specialist subjects of mathematics, science and design and technology, are having an important impact in improving provision in other areas of the curriculum. Their approaches have helped to improve, for instance, the GCSE results in English. There is a growing culture of consistency and accountability across the school. Senior leaders ensure that provision continues to improve through the regular checking of the work of middle leaders. They routinely observe lessons and staff are shown how to improve their practice. Judgements about teaching and learning are accurate.

The governing body has appointed a task force of five members to oversee each of the areas for improvement identified after the last inspection. The task force has worked hard to help ensure that the school improves. Its members regularly visit the school and produce detailed reports with clear areas for further action. The governing body continues to receive training in developing its roles and responsibilities. A few governors have undertaken joint lesson observations with senior leaders.

The local authority's involvement in helping the school is generally satisfactory. Some of its staff have visited regularly and have helped some school staff to improve their practice. The school has valued this.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Champa Chauhan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a trailing flourish.

Champak Chauhan  
Her Majesty's Inspector