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15 July 2008

Mrs Lynn Key  
The Headteacher  
Burwood School  
Avalon Road  
Orpington  
BR6 9BD

Dear Mrs Key

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

Following my visit to your school on 9 July 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may 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 second monitoring inspection: 9 July 2008

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and senior leadership team, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the Local Authority (LA). At this visit all aspects of the school's work were considered, with particular attention given to teaching and learning, leadership and management, and pupils' personal development.

### Context

Since the previous visit, the then acting headteacher has been confirmed in post and arrangements have been put in place to revise the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team and appoint people to these posts. The LA has made it clear that Burwood will no longer accept pupils from Years 3 to 6 and from September 2009 the school will only make provision for secondary aged pupils.

### Achievement and standards

The systems for setting targets and tracking progress for all pupils that had been implemented at the time of the last visit are beginning to pay dividends. The school now has the information it needs to target improvement both for individuals and cohorts by setting realistic and challenging targets. Most teachers are now using this data to move pupils' learning forward. However, this practice is not consistent across the school and there are still a number of lessons in which pupils' needs are not met, the pace of learning is too leisurely and pupils are capable of achieving more. Considerably more pupils were entered for nationally recognised qualifications in the June 2008 examination series than has been the case in recent years. Teacher assessments indicate that a good proportion of these pupils are on track to attain qualifications that will enable them to continue their education or move into employment.

### Personal development and well-being

The improvements in behaviour, attendance and pupils' attitudes to their learning seen at the previous visit have been maintained. Most pupils are aware of what is expected of them in managing their own behaviour and, in the main, there is a harmonious atmosphere in the school which makes it a purposeful learning environment. In general, instances of poor behaviour are managed well, but there are lessons where staff do not apply the behaviour policy with sufficient rigour or consistency for it to be fully effective. The school's good systems to track and monitor attendance are having a very positive impact. The improvements seen at the last visit have been sustained and nearly half the pupils now have attendance rates over 90% for this term. Nearly all have made significant improvements in their attendance compared with that at their previous schools. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the rewards system for good attendance. Through good support from the LA and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) the number of persistent

non-attenders has been reduced. The school is investigating other ways in which to re-engage these pupils including home tuition and e-learning. Pupils indicate that the number of instances of bullying and racial harassment have dropped radically and that they now feel safe and secure compared with the past. As one said 'This is a much better place than it was a year ago'. Although staff and pupils speak very positively about these changes, they are not yet fully embedded into the ethos of the school.

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 school's systems to monitor teaching and learning give senior managers a very clear view of the support that all staff need to develop their practice. This has been confirmed by monitoring from the LA's advisers and an external consultant, and by sharing good practice with neighbouring mainstream and special schools. The amount of inadequate teaching has been reduced substantially and pupils' learning has improved, but there is still not sufficient consistency in teaching across the school to have the necessary impact on raising standards and improving pupils' achievements. Through the good programme of training that has been implemented, staff are now much more aware of the need to interact purposefully with pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. However, it is not yet a sufficiently consistent part of everyday practice to have its full impact.

Senior leaders have continued to develop the curriculum across the school so that the changes introduced for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are available to their younger peers. Much of this will be implemented in September 2008 so that there will be a wide range of vocational and work-related programmes available to all pupils. Already a good number of pupils have gained entry to courses such as BTEC Art at the local college. Staff have put much time and effort into developing their planning and introducing appropriate accreditation arrangements ready for the new academic year.

Staff provide good support for pupils' personal development and are always willing to listen and act on their concerns. However, they do not make the best use of information about pupils' progress to guide their academic development.

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 – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

Since the last visit, the school has gained much needed confidence in its ability to build its capacity to improve. A good start has been made to securing high quality

leadership by confirming the appointment of the acting headteacher to a substantive post and strengthening the governing body. However, there is still more to be done to complete the appointments at senior leadership level to secure the school's future. Plans are in place to ensure that this happens early in the Autumn Term 2008 so that the headteacher can drive forward her vision for the future set out in the comprehensive improvement plan which has been drawn up. The rigorous and robust systems to judge the effectiveness of the school's performance now provide good management information. Senior leaders have used these well to gain a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and to give governors the information they need to act effectively as the school's critical friend. To drive up standards and pupils' achievements, new teaching appointments are planned for September 2008 and leaders at all levels are actively engaged in setting targets for improvement in each subject area.

The school's partnerships with the LA and external agencies and with parents and the local community are now good. A particularly notable feature in these developments was the first Burwood School Fete at which prominent members of the local council and community, as well as parents were highly complimentary about how the school had changed for the better. Good work has been done to actively involve parents in their child's learning. This issue in the previous inspection report related to improving its partnerships with others has been addressed and is no longer inhibiting the school's progress.

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 – good

#### External support

The LA has played a very effective role in helping the school to improve. Good support has been provided to develop the skills of teachers and it has acted quickly in establishing the acting headteacher into a substantive role. The appointment of a school improvement partner (SIP) and an external consultant have given added impetus to developments.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that all staff fully implement the school's strategies to raise pupils' self esteem and confidence.
- Increase the school's capacity to improve by completing the restructuring of the senior leadership team.