

6 October 2008

Mrs Mary Morrison
The Headteacher
Bower Park School
Havering Road North
Romford
RM1 4YY

Dear Mrs Morrison

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 1 October 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the students and members of staff who gave me time and helpful information.

Since the inspection the senior leadership team has been reorganised and additional appointments made, including an additional deputy headteacher.

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 in February 2008, the school was asked to:

- Improve standards and progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 particularly in the core subjects and in ICT and business studies.
- Significantly improve the proportion of good teaching and learning experienced by students.
- Ensure all teachers maximise learning and students' progress throughout lessons and provide high quality feedback when assessing students' work.
- Ensure managers at all levels have a clear overview of current performance and clearly account for the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement.

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 students' achievement.

The impact of recent improvements can be seen in the summer 2008 GCSE examinations. Results showed a significant improvement. The proportion of students

gaining five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics increased from 23% in 2007 to 35% in 2008. This represented an acceleration in improvement; the proportion in 2005 being only 17%. Key Stage 3 results in 2008 have shown a good improvement in each core subject. However, the attainment of boys remains an area for concern. Business Studies teaching was taken over by a senior leader and results were well above the school average. Staffing changes in several subjects and particularly in information and communication technology (ICT) have led to an improvement in current standards, although the improvement came too late to be reflected in the 2008 results.

The school has taken robust action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. It has worked in partnership with 'Education London' and the local authority to gain a secure view of the quality of teaching and identify that which is inadequate. This understanding is shared with teachers at all levels and there is a good focus on self evaluation by all teachers as well as leaders. Improvement is evident through monitoring records. Soon after the inspection, it was found that the proportion of inadequate teaching may have been underestimated. The school's monitoring suggests that inadequate teaching has now been eradicated. Through a combination of training and coaching the bulk of teaching is improving from satisfactory to good. The school recognises the need to work with newly appointed staff to rapidly raise the quality of lessons.

Marking is much improved and it is now universal. The quality of feedback is still developing and is variable. Further training for staff on the use of data and on helping their students to reach challenging targets beyond 'working harder', is now planned.

The senior leadership team has been strengthened and has a new focus on raising standards. New appointments have strengthened the use of data. Middle leaders are more rigorous and accountability has been embedded at all levels. Regular monitoring boards provide an opportunity for the local authority to provide effective challenge. Students are very positive about improvements in the school, many of which were in place before the inspection. The summer results provided evidence of their impact.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A T Lyons', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector