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1 April 2009

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 24 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton  
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Burwood School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 24 March 2009

## 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. At this visit particular attention was given to standards and achievement, teaching and learning and attendance, although other aspects of the school's work were also observed.

## Context

Since the previous visit, the local authority has approved plans for an onsite skills centre for vocational and work-related learning and building work will commence shortly. The implementation of this centre from September 2009 will be the main focus of the work of the new assistant headteacher, who took up his post at half-term.

## Achievement and standards

The systems for setting targets and tracking progress for all pupils continue to be refined and now provide good-quality management information which is used well by senior managers. All staff have received training in how to use the information at classroom level to target improvements both for individuals and for cohorts by setting realistic and challenging goals. Most teachers are using this data to move pupils' learning forward. However, as it is such a recent development, the practice is not yet fully consistent across the school and there are still a number of lessons in which pupils are capable of achieving more. All pupils in Year 11 have been entered for nationally recognised qualifications in the June 2009 examinations that are very well matched to their needs and aspirations, including GCSE, Entry Level and vocational and work-related accreditation. Teacher assessments, and in some cases externally moderated course work, indicate that the majority 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

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning continue to improve. Compared with their performance in previous schools, this represents a great improvement for the majority. However, over time the school has taken a significant number of pupils who have been excluded and who have missed considerable portions of their education. In general, it has been very successful in re-engaging these pupils. However, there are still a small number of students who do not see the benefit of regular attendance and what the school can offer them. Several of these students are from families who condone their negative attitude. The change in the school's age range of pupils in September 2009 from 7–16 to 11–16 may help to address this issue. Through good

support from the local authority and the educational welfare officer, the number of persistent non-attenders has been reduced over recent visits. The number of pupils whose attendance rate is higher than 90% has continued to rise, but this rate is, inevitably, slowing down, leaving only the most persistent offenders. The school and the local authority recognise that overall attendance is still not good enough and are investing further resources in working with parents, including, as a last resort, taking legal action. However, this should not mask the radical improvement that most pupils have made in their attendance compared to their attendance at previous schools. There is a direct link between instances of poor behaviour and attendance. The behaviour of those who attend regularly is now mainly good. In general, instances of poor behaviour are managed well and are not allowed to affect the learning of others in the class. The personal, social and health education provision has been further strengthened through the introduction of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme so that most pupils are aware of what is expected of them in managing their own behaviour. There is now a harmonious atmosphere in the school which makes it a purposeful learning environment. Since the last inspection there have been no incidents of bullying or racist acts.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- establish effective systems to improve attendance and deal with bullying and racist acts – good

#### Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved further since the last visit. Monitoring reports over the last term and observations during the visit show no instances of teaching that is less than adequate and over two thirds that is good or better. The impact of higher-quality teaching is seen in improvements in pupils' motivation and self-esteem and their achievement is beginning to rise. High-quality training is given to all staff which has had a positive impact on improving pupils' learning. The systems to monitor teaching and learning are proving very effective in identifying the areas which need further improvements. These initiatives have been greeted enthusiastically by all staff. Staff now have a real sense of purpose, and have established good relationships and interact with pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Planning is now more focused on the needs of individual pupils and how these are to be addressed. However, there are still some lessons where planning focuses too heavily on delivering content. In the best lessons, good use is made of self- and peer-assessment to motivate and engage all the pupils to produce of their best.

The very positive changes in the curriculum implemented at the start of the academic year have been extremely effective in motivating pupils and helping them to re-engage in learning. The school continues to monitor carefully the progress of pupils on these courses to ensure they will be successful. The development of the skills centre puts the school in a very strong position to provide pupils with qualifications which are highly relevant to their future training and employability. The first pupils will start these courses in September 2009.

The stability in staffing has enabled more effective support to be given to pupils through the pastoral care system. They now feel safe and secure and have a much greater appreciation of the effect of their actions on others. This is due in part to the effectiveness of the systems in monitoring and support both pupils' personal and their academic development.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

### Leadership and management

The school's leaders and managers continue to develop their confidence and build its capacity to improve. The local authority has helped considerably by backing the school's bid to develop an onsite skills centre. The recent appointment of an assistant headteacher with responsibility for implementing the project from September 2009 has been crucial to this initiative. It has also helped the headteacher to finalise the development of her senior leadership team. This team now has the determination and commitment to put the headteacher's vision for the future of the school into practice. The systems for monitoring the quality of provision are rigorous and robust and the governing body is quickly refining its skills to act as an effective critical friend to the school. Although there is still more to be done to raise the quality of learning further and to improve overall attendance rates, all the pieces are in place to enable the school to drive up achievement.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- increase its capacity to improve by establishing high-quality leadership – good
- devise and implement the systems and practices needed to monitor, evaluate and ensure the effectiveness of its work – good
- improve its partnerships with parents, the local authority, external agencies and the community – good

### External support

The local authority has continued to play a very effective role in helping the school to improve and to give it the confidence it needs to move forward. Good support has been provided to develop the skills of teachers and has helped the headteacher in developing her senior team and appointing new teachers.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Improve attendance.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning.