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16 June 2010

Ms Ruth Martin
The Headteacher
The Royal Docks Community School
Prince Regent Lane
Custom House
London
E16 3HS

Dear Ms Martin

Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Royal Docks Community School

Following my visit with Howard Dodd, additional inspector, to your school on 9 and 10 June 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2009. 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.

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 Children's Services for Newham.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of The Royal Docks Community School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 June 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the senior and middle leadership team, groups of students, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority.

Context

The school became the Royal Docks Co-operative Learning Partnership on June 1 2010. Trustees are from the University of East London, St Clere's School Thurrock, the Co-operative College and Newham Children & Young People's Services. Representatives from St Clere's and the University of East London have already joined the school's governing body. The headteacher has now been confirmed in her post. Appointments to the senior leadership team are now complete. A business manager has been appointed to manage the school's finances.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The proportion of students set to achieve five or more GCSEs at A* to C is set to improve on last year. The number of students set to achieve high grades in English and mathematics demonstrates good improvement on the previous year's results. The school's predictions in science indicate that students' performance at GCSE will not demonstrate an improvement. In Year 9, the school's data show a good improvement in students attaining higher levels at the end of Key Stage 3 as compared to 2009.

Results provided by the school demonstrate much improved assessment data which also reflect the ambitious targets set by senior and middle leaders. The focus of improving the standards of White British students has had a positive impact on their achievement. Students in Year 11 are predicted to achieve better than in recent years.

In some lessons, inspectors observed the good use of peer assessment and self-assessment, which enabled students to reinforce their own learning. They achieved well in lessons where they were engaged in a variety of tasks which challenged them to do their best. These lessons proved the most enjoyable for students. Most students know their National Curriculum predicted targets and their current levels of attainment. Inspectors saw good examples of students working well in groups which allowed them to make good contribution to their learning. In the less successful lessons, students had few opportunities to contribute to their own learning and, on occasions, were not stimulated by the tasks set.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- raise standards and achievement by ensuring realistic but challenging targets are used effectively by all staff to secure rapid improvement – good.

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Students have stated they have noticed improved student behaviour around the school and in lessons. Fewer students are turning up late to lessons. The school also reports an improvement in the levels of students' attendance and a reduction of students who are persistently absent from school.

The effectiveness of provision

Inspectors observed many good lessons, although many satisfactory lessons were also observed. In all lessons observed teachers use a standard proforma to identify the different learning outcomes students will achieve. In the stronger lessons teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the differing needs of their students and plan their lessons to accommodate this well. The variety of tasks and pace of learning in these lessons enable students to enjoy their learning and make good progress. Inspectors observed some effective marking of students' work that enabled them to have a good understanding of what they needed to do to improve their attainment. This good marking also referenced students' performance in relation to the National Curriculum level well. However, the standard of marking within subjects and across the school is of variable quality.

The well thought-through plans to develop the curriculum in Key Stage 4 are now established. Current Year 9 students say that they have been given good advice and guidance to allow them to make the right choices for their future economic well-being. From September there will be four pathways available which have been designed to provide good opportunities for all students to do well. More able students will be able to take a programme that includes triple science and modern foreign languages. There is a 'third way' option which will consist of a range of vocational programmes. The fourth pathway is an 'alternative curriculum' which has been designed for a small number of students who require intensive support and tailored literacy and numeracy qualifications. Good progress has been made to provide additional literacy support for students with low literacy levels in Key Stage 3. The full impact of this programme is not yet realised. The stronger adherence to the school's policies and clear guidelines for punctuality, behaviour and attendance policies has enabled the school to significantly reduce its level of persistent absences and improve student behaviour.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching and students' progress by ensuring teachers consistently:
 - use a range of activities which challenge and motivate, and meet the needs of all students

- provide students with clear information on how well they are achieving and what they need to improve – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher and the senior leadership team have worked well to secure further improvements in students' achievement, attendance and behaviour.

The confirmation of the headteacher in her post has contributed well to the increase in momentum of some of the school's actions. The 2010 predicted results demonstrate sound improvement on 2009, there is also improvement in students' behaviour and their level of attendance. There has been a significant reduction in the budget overspend. Leaders and managers are now tackling areas of weakness systematically. The school's self-evaluation is realistic, broadly accurate and is used well by leaders and managers.

The school's data show that leaders and managers have now developed a sound understanding of the achievement of different groups of students. Actions taken to improve the performance of White British students have had good impact. The actions taken to improve the performance of students in Key Stage 3 are also having good effect.

Senior leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning are starting to gain ground. The targeted support for weaker teachers and the sharper scrutiny of the performance of departments have successfully reduced the proportion of inadequate teachers. However, the school recognises actions to bring about improvement by some subject leaders are yet to bear fruit. The focus of monitoring their subjects' performance or action planning is not yet sharp enough to bring about improvement. The good practice within the school is not used consistently throughout the school to improve teaching and assessment.

The governing body continues to monitor the school's work and is developing closer scrutiny of the school's performance. The new appointments to the governing body are working well.

Progress since the last inspection:

- improve the quality and impact of monitoring and evaluation and improvement planning undertaken by managers and governors – good.

External support

The local authority continues to monitor the actions of the school well and provide appropriate challenge. Along with the School Improvement Partner, London Challenge and Education London, it has provided effective support for many areas of the school's work including subject improvement. The executive headteacher provides robust challenge and is highly effective in her contribution to the school's improving performance. Her work with the senior and middle leadership team has

enabled the school to provide closer scrutiny of its work. The level of external support given to the school is still extensive.