



14 March 2006

Ms Virginia Bridge  
Rye Oak School  
Whorlton Road  
London  
SE15 3PD

Dear Ms Bridge

## **FRESH START: MONITORING INSPECTION OF RYE OAK SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Jackie Krafft HMI to your school on 7 and 8 March 2006, 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 opened in April 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the members of the leadership team, a group of learning support assistants, a group of pupils, and held a telephone discussion with the chair of governors.

### **Context**

One teacher has resigned since the previous monitoring visit and their replacement is an agency teacher. This brings the total number of agency teachers to six, which is half the number of class teachers. The school has started a vigorous campaign to recruit suitably qualified teachers with a view to the school being fully staffed by permanent teachers in September 2006. Initial responses to advertisements and open days have been encouraging.

## **Achievement and standards**

Standards are rising but remain low overall. However, the pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The school's own data shows that for many pupils the gap between the levels at which they are working and the levels appropriate for their age is narrowing. Improvement is most apparent in reading, where many of the pupils who had levels of attainment that were well below expectation have made good progress.

Satisfactory progress

## **Personal development and well-being.**

The pupils' behaviour and social skills have improved because relationships are good and pupils know what is expected of them. The school's code of conduct is constantly referred to in lessons and assemblies and is consistently applied. As a result, pupils generally treat each other with respect, are polite and co-operate well when working together. However, sometimes a few feel that they are not listened to by adults. Exclusions have reduced considerably this term because the behaviour policy is applied consistently and a small learning support unit has been established for older pupils.

Most pupils enjoy their lessons and attitudes to learning have improved, particularly where lessons are carefully planned to meet their different learning needs. Most pupils know how well they are doing but are not clear about how they can improve because their targets are not specific enough.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils in the nursery are confident and play well together because they are well supported and the routines of the day are well established. They are given good opportunities to develop their independence so when water is spilt, for example, they calmly clear it up. This good practice is not built on as pupils move through the school as further opportunities to develop independence are limited.

The school monitors attendance rigorously and gives weekly feedback to pupils on the attendance rates of each class. Although there was much sickness absence during the early part of the term, recent figures show attendance is now satisfactory.

Good progress

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 13 of the 14 lessons seen and was good in six and inadequate in one. In the best lessons, the relationships between adults and children were good; the pace was brisk and a range of activities was used to engage and excite the learners; effective questioning ensured that pupils were made to think about what they were doing; there were good opportunities for pupils to discuss and explore their ideas; consistent use was made of praise and the school's reward system, which increased motivation and the pupils' pride in their work. In the weaker lessons, the tasks were not linked to prior learning and pupils were not expected to review what they already knew about the topic being studied; the tasks were over directed by the teacher and pupils had little opportunity to develop independence; learning objectives did not provide success criteria and pupils were not encouraged to evaluate their own achievements; the feedback provided for pupils did not identify how they could improve their work; the most able pupils were identified but tasks were not sufficiently challenging to enable them to make good progress and too little was expected of them.

In literacy and mathematics the pupils who are working at higher levels than the majority have been identified by the school's rigorous monitoring and tracking procedures and a start has been made on making sure that these pupils are sufficiently challenged. Some more able pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional work but in most lessons these pupils are not sufficiently challenged and as a result do not make the progress that they should. This is because questions and tasks do not give them opportunities to explore and develop their ideas and do not offer sufficient opportunities for these pupils to develop as independent learners.

Pupils are starting to be involved with assessing their own work and many of the older pupils knew their target levels but they were not always aware of what they needed to do to achieve them. The school's system for tracking the pupils' achievements is being used to provide pupils and teachers with graphs which show individual attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and compare them with the standards expected for the pupils' ages. This is enabling pupils to have a clearer understanding of the progress that they are making. The school has planned to broaden this initiative to include science and information and communication technology (ICT).

Learning support assistants work in partnership with class teachers and provide good support for individuals and groups of pupils.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has improved. Systems for early identification of need and clear referral routes have been established so that support is matched appropriately to pupils' needs. The progress pupils make in reading is analysed and used to identify if extra support is needed. The effectiveness of support is monitored, and a training programme has been developed to ensure staff have the expertise needed to support pupils effectively.

Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language has improved. Pupils' needs are assessed on admission to school and appropriate support is given individually and increasingly in lessons. When pupils are not supported, the work they are given is not always sufficiently modified for them to complete independently.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in November 2005

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching - satisfactory progress
- Increase the level of challenge for the most able pupils - inadequate progress
- Involve pupils more actively in assessing their own learning - satisfactory progress

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good and leaders provide good role models for other staff and pupils. Monitoring is robust and frequent, and is closely related to the priorities identified in the school's improvement plan. Paired observation of lessons is ensuring consistent judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and the school's own profile of the quality of teaching closely matched that of the inspectors. The role of the phase leaders continues to develop. There has been a focus on developing their strategic leadership skills and as a result they are creating effective teams. The senior leadership team undertakes rigorous self-evaluation and uses the findings effectively. The performance management of staff, including support staff is thorough and effective in bringing about improvement and staff value the opportunities that they have had for continuing professional development. Those responsible for leading and managing the school are committed to running a fair and inclusive school, in which each individual matters.

Good progress

## **External support**

The school continues to use good links with other agencies to support pupils at risk.

Satisfactory progress

## **Main Judgements**

The school's overall progress is satisfactory.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Provide better opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners
- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently to inform pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to achieve their targets

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Chief Education Officer for Southwark.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis  
**H M Inspector**