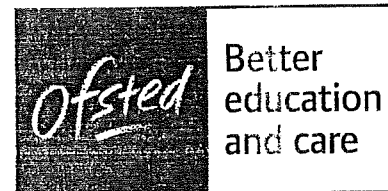


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 020 7421 6800
F 020 7421 6707
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 7421 6811
Direct F 020 7421 6644
email



03 March 2006

Rachel Jones
Headteacher
Grey Court School
Ham Street, Ham
Richmond Upon Thames
Surrey TW10 7HN

Dear Rachel

OFSTED Survey on the Achievement of Different Groups of Learners 2005/6

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation and that of your staff, during my visit to the school on 9 February 2006 to look at the work of the school in relation to the achievement of different groups of learners.

The visit will provide much useful evidence for our survey in trying to identify the factors that promote high levels of achievement for particular groups of learners. The school will not be named in any publication without your permission and most evidence will be used at a general level to identify trends and success factors. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Local Authority and will be made available to future inspection teams. Please remember that the evidence on which the feedback was based is limited to what was observed during the day. The evidence gathered was based on discussions with senior leaders and a small group of students, two part lesson observations and scrutiny of documentation, including some students' work.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit, to support the confirmed achievements of different groups of learners in your school.

The main points were as follows:

- The school is aware of discrepancies in the achievements of some groups of students. As a result, they have put in place a whole school assessment system which is very detailed and enables teachers and senior managers to track the achievement of its students. The system and its procedures are used extensively by

senior staff and assist in targeting intervention strategies. It is used well by some departments and individual teachers, but this is not yet consistent. Where it is used well students make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

- The provision for students' moral and social development is very good and is a strength of the school's work. Attendance indicates that students enjoy school and want to attend. There are a minority of students who do not arrive in school on time and this is an issue for improvement in the school's improvement plan. Students' behaviour has improved and as a result there is a reduction in exclusions. The majority of students have positive attitudes to learning and work hard.
- There are discrepancies in achievement for some groups of learners which have been identified as a result of the school's thorough assessment systems and the tracking of students' progress. The school have made changes to the curriculum, most notably in Key Stage 4, as a result of their specialist status in science, mathematics and computing.
- There are effective strategies in place to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning to ensure that the learning needs of all students are met and to improve achievement for all groups of students. The quality of teachers' marking is variable and does not always tell students where they have been successful and what they need to learn next. Additionally, there are some inconsistencies in the recording of students' targets. In a few students' books this does not support the school's determination to improve the achievement of all students.
- The majority of teachers use the information from the assessment and tracking systems well in order to inform their planning and target setting. These systems have been developed and modified to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- There are now good systems in place for monitoring the students' academic and personal development. Parents and carers are involved effectively in their children's learning and progress.
- The systems the school has in place to evaluate their practice and therefore improve the achievement of students are very good. This has enabled the school to identify those groups who are not achieving as well as they could and to put in place a variety strategies to rectify the situation. These have been mainly successful. However, although all staff have access to the systems, they are not

always used, by a minority of teachers, with the necessary rigour to ensure all students achieve as well as possible.

- Overall, the leadership of the senior managers is good. There is now a detailed school improvement plan which effectively addresses areas for improvement. The curriculum and extra-curricular provision have improved considerably particularly in Key Stage 4. Behaviour has improved and, as a result, there are fewer unacceptable incidents that lead to exclusion. Good links have been developed through extended services, specialist provision and the Leading Edge partnership to promote students' learning and well-being.
- The school has the potential to achieve its ambition to be a great school.

Areas for improvement in relation to this issue, which we discussed, included:

- Ensuring a consistently high standard of self-evaluation across all departments.
- Ensuring consistency of marking and feedback to students across the school.
- Ensuring that students throughout the school know and understand the standards they are working at and how to reach their targets.

In my judgement, the overall effectiveness of your provision for different groups of learners is satisfactory.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to raise achievement in your school. Thank you once again for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely



PP **Jenny Catlin**
Additional Inspector