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6 October 2010

Mr Steve Burrows
Headteacher
Ormesby School
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Dear Mr Burrows

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Ormesby School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 October 2010, and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to the staff and students who willingly participated in this inspection. Please convey my thanks to the local authority representative and the member of your interim governing body for finding time to talk with me on the telephone.

Since the previous inspection, three newly qualified teachers joined the school at the beginning of September 2010. Although designated senior management roles have remained the same as that seen during the previous inspection, there has been some refinement of key areas of responsibilities that align to the action in the school's post-Ofsted action plan.

As a result of the inspection on 9 and 10 February 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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 the pupils' achievement.

At the time of the previous inspection, the students' attainment and progress was inadequate. The most recent unvalidated data from public examinations in 2010 show that there have been good improvements in all major comparators at Key Stage 4, with improvements in the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades in their GCSE examinations and in the two core subjects of English and mathematics. The attainment of the students at Key Stage 4 is now close to the

national average. The vast majority of students are now making at least satisfactory progress, with some that is better. Overall, therefore, achievement is now satisfactory. These improvements have resulted from an increased focus on teaching and assessment across the school, which includes well-focused learning activities for the students. The school's specialist status in engineering has also made a positive contribution to the work of the school; in particular, in helping to raise standards in mathematics, science and technology.

Good progress has been made in helping teachers and students to raise their aspirations and expectations of personal success. Lesson planning is of a satisfactory standard. Where it is most effective, teachers are explicit about the students' learning in terms of increased knowledge and skills, and improved understanding. Teachers are now more aware of what they need to do to challenge the students to make progress in their learning. Classroom practice is well organized and provides the students with a variety of learning activities, which include individual, group and whole-class work. On a few occasions, however, whole-class discussions are longer than is needed for the students, many of whom have already shown that they understand what they are required to do. Throughout the school there is increasing use of performance data, which means that students' progress is now much more tightly monitored than seen at the time of the previous inspection. Students are aware of the targets set for them and the overwhelming majority benefit from this information. Teachers use questioning satisfactorily, although most is of the closed type, demanding a quick and specific response. Where more open-ended questioning is used in lessons, the students are challenged to think more about the validity of their answers in relation to views from their peers. The students now have regular opportunities for peer and teacher assessment, and those students who spoke with the inspector are confident that their views are taken seriously. The impact of this has been the raising of expectations of what can be achieved by both teachers and students.

The data collection process in the school is working well and is providing teachers, middle managers and senior leaders and managers with a clearer overview of the progress that the students are making in their learning. There are regular lesson observations and scrutiny of the students' workbooks and teachers' planning, which are now part of a well-established process of evaluation and monitoring of the school's quality of provision. The strategy to refine management and leadership roles, following the previous inspection, has worked well, and has made for greater clarity and accountability within the school. This has helped the interim governing body to gain a better overview and understanding of the progress being made within the school. The school's raising attainment plan provides a sense of purpose and direction for improvement; the results of which have contributed to the good progress made since the previous inspection. However, there needs to be further work to identify more specific success measures against each of the aspects from the two areas for improvement as a means of helping senior leaders and managers to assess, more accurately, the relative rate of progress against the planned actions. These actions will also help evaluate the cost effectiveness of specific actions for

improvement. The attendance of the students has improved since the previous inspection, together with a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. The 2009/10 attendance figure of 91.8% is in line with the local authority average, but still below the national figure. Overall, however, progress in improving attendance is satisfactory. The number of exclusions has decreased since the previous inspection. Better classroom practice and a higher profile of senior managers and leaders in classrooms have made a significant contribution to this decreasing figure. Behaviour during the inspection was always satisfactory and occasionally good.

Following the previous inspection, Ofsted judged that the local authority's statement of action needed to be improved in a number of important areas. Although the local authority is assessing the progress of the school on a regular basis, the resubmitted action plan, which is the same as the original one, is still too imprecise in terms of success measures, timescales, costs and the evaluation and monitoring role of the interim governing body. The local authority considers that the school's raising attainment plan meets its requirements in respect of its required action plan. However, this plan lacks specificity about local authority involvement in monitoring and evaluating progress against each of the separate aspects of the two areas for improvement. Other external links that the school and local authority have commissioned have had a beneficial effect on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and in improving leadership and management.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2010

- Improve the impact of teaching on students' learning, attainment and progress by:
 - eradicating inconsistencies in its quality and ensuring teachers always have high expectations of all students
 - ensuring the outcomes of formal, regular monitoring of teaching and learning lead to strategies to enhance teachers' skills, and the sharing of good practice
 - consistently using assessment and information about students' prior attainment to plan work and lessons that meet the learning needs of all students
 - ensuring that lessons provide interesting and varied tasks that challenge students of all abilities
 - ensuring all teachers are using questioning to challenge students to think more deeply about their learning and to develop their oracy skills
 - providing more opportunities for students' self and peer-evaluation of their work to develop their analytical, critical and independence skills
 - involving students more regularly in assessing their work and providing accurate and regular feedback on written work to guide students on how to improve further.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring information systems are used to provide a regular strategic overview of the performance of individuals and groups to enable the effective evaluation of students' progress and the impact of actions and interventions
 - developing the expertise of all managers in relation to monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of their area of responsibility and of the school
 - holding all managers to account for the effective use of regular assessment information in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring the monitoring and review strategies within the raising achievement plan include agreed milestones and measurable success criteria

- continuing to develop strategies to improve attendance and to reduce the number of persistent absentees
- ensuring that behaviour management strategies help to reduce the number of student days lost to fixed-period exclusion.