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Mrs Heather Scott  
Headteacher  
Barlby High School  
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North Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Scott

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Barlby high School**

Thank you for the help which you, your staff and your students gave when I inspected your school on 20 October 2010 and for the information which you provided during the inspection.

Almost one third of staff left the school during the last school year, the great majority since the last inspection. This is the result of the restructuring of the school and a reduction in teaching staff from 45 to 32, alongside changing expectations. Thirteen new staff started this term, including seven teachers. There are fewer short-term supply teachers. There is a new faculty leader in English. New faculty and year leadership structures have been introduced.

As a result of the inspection on 10 and 11 March 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 **satisfactory** progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

In 2010, the decline in GCSE results was reversed and there was a significant increase in the proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. Although results improved, Year 11 students continued to underachieve, especially in English. This was because students performed less well in the English exam than the coursework. In addition, underachievement in English had not been identified due to inaccurate assessment. The new head of English has an appropriate strategy in place to remedy this. In 2010, students made improved progress in mathematics. In a few subjects, as a result of weak teaching or

leadership, significant underachievement was combined with poor assessment of predicted results. In these subjects, teachers or leaders have been replaced and/or courses changed. An improved range of courses and earlier action to tackle underachievement is resulting in better progress by the current Year 11. The new school tracking system shows that most students made broadly expected progress in Years 7 to 9. Teacher assessment in Year 9 shows that students made slightly improved progress in English and in mathematics but progress remained below expectations. The quality of learning in lessons has improved and students are clearer about what they are expected to achieve. They are benefiting from the greater stability, and quality of teaching and learning is more enjoyable.

At present, the underachievement in 2010 leaves the school vulnerable to criticism at the next inspection. This year the school is expecting the results of the early entry GCSE in English, and the modular GCSE tests in mathematics, to show improved progress by current Year 11 students. The school improvement plan lacks the relevant timescale and specific success criteria that would enable the school to summarise the progress across years and subjects by the potential date of the next inspection.

Formal assessment is now frequent and regular, and students are better informed about their progress against targets in all year groups and subjects. Underachievement is identified and actions taken more promptly. Greater use is made of test analysis to identify particular weaknesses in learning. Day-to-day assessment has improved and is more consistent, due to the new policy to give specific praise and a point for improvement on written work. There is a greater use of self- and peer-assessment by students. Assessment is providing more effective guidance for students on what to aim for and what to do next. Assessment of students' progress is not validated by samples of internal or external moderation.

The consistency and effectiveness of teaching has improved as a result of staff changes, the effective implementation of whole-school policies for lesson planning and assessment, and the well-focused use of training and development activities. The new procedures for rewards and sanctions have improved the climate for teaching and learning. The quality of homework is more effective because it is better planned and more imaginative. The school has met its interim target for improving the proportion of good or better teaching. In the better teaching that was observed there was a good variety of active learning tasks, an effective use of assessment and good questioning by teachers. The proportion of inadequate teaching has been reduced but not eliminated. Occasionally, teaching continues to lack challenge which leads to off-task behaviour.

The headteacher and senior leaders provide clear direction and there is a good pace of change. Senior leaders know the school well. Accountability has increased and there is more teamwork. Middle leaders are becoming more involved and are taking greater responsibility. The sports specialism has increased the engagement of students in out-of-school activity and in mathematics revision.

The local authority statement of action was evaluated by Ofsted and it fulfils the requirements. The Interim Executive Board has provided effective support and challenge for the school during a period of significant change. The local authority has provided good support for mathematics and in tackling the financial deficit. The quality of other aspects of local authority support has been more variable. The School Improvement Partner, other headteachers and a deputy headteacher have provided effective support for school leaders.

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

Bernard Campbell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010**

- Raise standards of attainment and accelerate progress, by ensuring all teachers use accurate day-to-day assessment of what students have learned in order to give them clear guidance on what they need to do next.
- Eliminate inadequate teaching and increase the proportion of teaching which is good, by ensuring that effective approaches to teaching and assessment are used consistently well by October 2010.