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Mr Patrick Cook  
Headteacher  
Tupton Hall School  
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Dear Mr Cook

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Tupton Hall School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when we inspected your school on 19 January 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I would also be grateful if you could pass on our thanks to the staff and students who we met during our visit.

As a result of the inspection on 19 October 2009, 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 has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Examination results in 2010 showed a further improvement on previous years. In 2010, the proportion of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE rose to 76%, which is broadly in line with the national average, while the proportion of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including in English and mathematics rose to 59%, which is above the national average. Predictions based on the monitoring of students' progress and comparison with previous years show that the school is well placed to exceed these outcomes in 2011. This shows that since the previous inspection there has been a significant rise in students' achievement. The improvement in the progress which pupils make was also seen in lessons observed during this visit. Inspectors observed 23 lessons with members of the school's senior leadership team. There was a high level of agreement between the observers over the judgements made, showing that the school's judgements are accurate and reliable. The majority of teaching seen was good, with learning and



progress reflecting this. This is a positive outcome of the school's ongoing work, which started before the previous inspection, on raising staff awareness about what makes good teaching. In the lessons seen, planning effectively took the learning needs of pupils into account and a variety of methods were used so that lessons met the specific needs of pupils.

Teachers are now more adept at using assessment to support learning. The starting point for this is the improved data system in the school. Teachers contribute to the collection and use of data and are held increasingly to account for the performance of pupils they teach. Planning is generally precise with clear lesson aims linked to outcomes which pupils and staff use to assess the learning in lessons. Pupils know their levels and predicted grades and know what to do to improve. Oral and written feedback by the teachers provides pupils with a comment about how well they are doing and how they can improve further. The development of pupils' independent learning skills has not improved as much as other areas of teaching, but leaders are aware of this and plans are in place to improve this area. Pupils behave well but are sometimes too passive in lessons. Although this does not disrupt learning, they are not actively contributing to their own learning. This is the legacy of past concerns when teachers used 'teacher talk' so that there were fewer opportunities for pupils to go 'off task'. This is now not the case and teachers who are engaging pupils in more active learning tasks are seeing the benefits in the quality of learning taking place. Attendance has improved in recent years and the rate of persistent absences is significantly lower than in previous years. However, there are some signs of an increase in absences which the monitoring system has identified and action is being taken to tackle this.

The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work have improved since the inspection. Robust systems for setting targets and tracking students' progress are now embedded and leaders closely monitor the performance of different faculties. A well-planned rolling programme means that all faculties are assessed and reported on in turn. Data and tracking systems are robust enough to monitor progress to a detailed level and flexible enough to evaluate the progress of individuals and groups of students, based on a wide range of criteria. This permits earlier identification of students at risk of underachievement, allowing interventions to be put in place accordingly. There is increasing collaboration between the faculties and pastoral teams which promotes a shared responsibility for raising attainment. Structures and practices have been developed for academic and pastoral teams to work together and share information. This approach is seen by students as providing more consistency; it particularly helps with the ongoing setting and reviewing of targets and planning for their next steps towards meeting their targets.

The school's specialism performs well and the school is using the strengths in the specialism to enhance the quality of the curriculum in other areas of the school. A recent example of this is the involvement of the physical education (PE) staff in supporting the introduction of the science BTEC qualification. Other initiatives include the increased use of information and communication technology, targeted

interventions and systems to track progress and identify areas of underachievement. Partnerships contribute to enhanced learning and well-being and continue to be an effective facet of the school's work as at the time of the previous inspection.

Developments since the inspection show that the leadership has a good understanding of the school's context, knows what to do to improve and has plans in place which have proved to be effective so far. Although it is early days, there is already evidence of the significant impact that these changes have had on the quality of provision and outcomes and that the school is well placed to make progress in developing the capacity to sustain improvements.

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

David Muir  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2009

- Raise levels of attainment and the rate at which all students make progress in their learning by ensuring that:
  - all students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and thus develop their independent learning skills
  - learning activities within lessons are better targeted in order to meet the specific needs of students of differing abilities
  - the use of assessment to support learning is refined so that it is effectively integrated with learning activities in order to speed up progress
  - questioning is used effectively in all lessons to probe students' understanding, to challenge their thinking and to provide them with opportunities to contribute.
  
- Embed the new systems for monitoring and evaluating students' progress so that pastoral and academic support is fully integrated and ensures that, for all students, underachievement is identified early and intervention put in place promptly.