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16 June 2011

Mr M Hill
Executive Principal
Risedale Sports and Community College
Hipswell
Catterick Garrison
North Yorkshire
DL9 4BD

Dear Mr Hill

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Risedale Sports and Community College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school with Mary Lanovy-Taylor, additional inspector, on 15 June 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, students, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority, who provided a clear insight into the life of the school.

The number of students on roll at the school has dropped from 520 at the time of the previous inspection to 464. There is considerable student mobility due to the high proportion of students with family members in the armed services. The school has been selected as one of the International Inspiration Schools working on a prestigious initiative led by The British Council, UK Sport and UNICEF, linked to the 2012 Olympic Games.

As a result of the inspection on 24 and 25 November 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 satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The proportion of students achieving five good grades at GCSE or equivalent, including English and mathematics, rose to 34% in 2010. This figure is significantly below the national average and slightly below the government's floor standard but represents sustained improvement for the school. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades rose to 61%, continuing a trajectory of improvement that is sharper than that found nationally. Students' average point scores have improved overall, as have their average point scores in English and in mathematics. There has also been a sharp increase to 52% in the proportion of students achieving two good science qualifications: this figure is close to the national average. GCSE results in 2010 indicated that students made much more progress in English and mathematics from their relative starting points than previous

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

cohorts. The school's increasingly reliable data indicate that attainment and progress are set to rise further in 2011 and 2012. Intervention to support students who are identified to be at risk of underachieving is timely and well-considered.

Observations of learning in lessons confirm that the majority of students are making better progress. The best teaching observed by inspectors was lively, imaginative and tailored to meet students' needs. Teachers asked challenging questions and expected students to evaluate their own and others' work. They incorporated a range of activities suited to students' different learning styles. There is still some variability in teachers' use of students' prior attainment data which means that lessons are not always designed to meet the needs and accelerate the progress of different groups of students. On occasions, low level disruption from a small number of students slows the pace of learning. Marking is variable in quality; the best includes helpful comments which celebrate achievement and advise on improvement but some is perfunctory and does not respond to students' weaknesses regarding spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. Teachers have worked hard to display key vocabulary and definitions in their classrooms and some draw students' attention to these during lessons. There has been a strong drive from the English department and librarian to establish a reading culture. Paired reading activities between older and younger students have had a positive impact on both literacy and self-esteem. Planning is underway to link sport and literacy through the school's work within the International Inspiration initiative. This work draws together the school's two specialist strands and is an illustration of its increasingly outward-facing approach.

Students welcome the increase in the range of ways in which they can make a positive contribution to their school. They eagerly take on responsibilities as councillors, literacy leaders, modern foreign language leaders and sports leaders. Several are undertaking Sports Youth Apprenticeships which require them to serve the wider community. Their opinions about different aspects of the school are more regularly sought, including through the student achievement forum. In discussion, students identified a number of ways in which the school has improved, including more opportunities for them to talk about their own learning. A few students were involved, with senior leaders, in the recent review of the humanities faculty.

The federation with Northallerton College continues to make a significant contribution to the school's development. There is a common set of management processes across the two schools and opportunities for sharing good practice have been well received by staff in both schools. The strategic priorities of the federation are clearly articulated and widely understood.

The local authority has continued to provide good support to the school, in negotiation with the senior leaders and in proportion to need. The extensive support provided by the National Challenge Adviser has been greatly appreciated. He has involved governors directly in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this activity has supported their understanding of the school's performance and enabled them to ask insightful and challenging questions. Consultant support has been particularly effective in developing

consistency in teaching, resulting in the acceleration of students' progress in mathematics. The support of an Advanced Skills Teacher for religious education has helped to steer development in this area in order to engage students' interest.

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

Mrs Shirley Gornall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 24 and 25 November 2009

- Further raise standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by:
 - making sure that the progress of students is consistently good
 - building upon recent improvements in students' literacy skills.

- Ensure that students make faster progress and further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - increasing the pace and level of challenge in lessons, so that good progress is evident throughout the college
 - seeing that teachers' use of information they have about students' progress is more widespread and that they use this information more effectively in planning and delivering lessons that will meet the whole range of students' needs.

- Promote students' personal development by:
 - consolidating and extending recent initiatives aimed at encouraging student voice in school
 - helping students to take on more responsibility for their own learning and ensuring that they all know what to do to improve their work further.