



14 March 2007

Mrs M Collins
Headteacher
Hare Law School
Catchgate
Annfield Plain
Stanley
County Durham
DH9 8DT

Dear Mrs Collins

OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help that you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 14 March 2007. In particular, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information that you provided before and during my visit. Also thanks to the chair of governors and pupils for their time and valuable contribution to my visit.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection on January 2006, the school was asked to improve the contribution of subject leaders in raising the quality of teaching and learning, increase the confidence and competence of pupils in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and set challenging whole school targets to boost pupils' achievement.

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.

Members of staff have assessed pupils' performance using appropriate procedures that measure the small steps in their progress. Staff and governors have used the assessment data to set whole school targets. Senior leaders are evaluating their target setting process and the level of challenge provided by the targets. They have identified the strengths of their assessment procedures and are looking to further improve the reliability of their target setting. In particular, the school is working towards more consistent target setting which will include comparing pupils' work with those in similar schools. Appropriate targets have been set for pupils' success in

accredited courses at the end of Year 11. These targets reflect pupils' wide range of learning needs.

During the past twelve months a firm foundation has been established as the basis for improvements in leadership and management at all levels in the school. The senior leadership team is now established and they provide a clear agenda for improvement. Curriculum and assessment coordinators have been appointed and subject leaders are now contributing to the school's self-review process. A timetable has been set for the further development of the role of subject leaders. They have been provided with clear expectations for their work including an increased focus on their contribution to continual improvement. Performance management and the provision for continuing professional development have helped develop a shared understanding of the expectations for good teaching. The headteacher is a positive role model in the school and has successfully introduced a more rigorous process for the monitoring of teaching and learning. The results of her monitoring show that teachers' expectations are higher and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving. The school is now in a strong position to increase the pace of change and ensure that subject coordinators make a good impact on continual improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Following the inspection, the school enlisted professional support to carry out a detailed audit of the provision for ICT. The school responded positively to the audit recommendations and, as a result, they have improved the ICT equipment and provided appropriate staff training. A technician ensures that the pupils have access to a reliable system. Working on up-to-date computers contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils are now making adequate progress in the use of ICT in other subjects. For example, good use is made of ICT in English to extend their writing. In addition, in a lesson seen during the visit, pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking a full and active part in an interactive whiteboard quiz based on quotes from Romeo and Juliet. Pupils make adequate use of ICT in maths and science to help them organise their data from experiments and surveys. They are becoming more able to use their own initiative in their work, for example, ICT tasks are set for pupils to research information at home. Pupils are keen to show their work and are proud of their achievements. Similar enthusiasm is evident among staff who are keen to increase the number of interactive whiteboards in the school. Senior leaders and governors are aware of the need to continue the drive to improve resources.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Dave Smith
Additional Inspector