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Mrs Anne Turner
The Headteacher
Fullbrook School
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Dear Mrs Turner

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 5 March 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and students who spoke to me.

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 in February 2007, the school was asked to:

- Improve achievement and attendance in the sixth form.
- Improve achievement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) throughout the school.
- Use assessment data to ensure lessons meet all students' needs.
- Monitor the teaching of citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE) to check it is having an impact on students.
- Monitor behaviour improvement strategies more rigorously to enable further improvement to be made.

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 students' achievement.

Students' GCSE results in 2007 were significantly above those found nationally and show a continued improvement from previous years. This represents good progress for this year group in Key Stage 4. Standards by the end of Key Stage 3 in 2007 were also well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. In

English this was an improvement from previous years following targeted support and work with the local authority.

At the time of the last inspection the Head of Sixth Form had only been in post for a short time. Since then there have been a variety of positive actions to improve provision and achievement in the sixth form. The school has been stringent in ensuring that students are on courses that are appropriate for them and that they are subsequently monitored carefully and supported both academically and personally. Attendance in the sixth form is now good. A-level results in 2007 showed that students' achievement had improved and results were above national averages. Careful tracking of current students' progress indicates that the majority are on target to meet their expected grades. The school identifies that although improved there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and a greater proportion needs to good or better. In particular, lessons need to further challenge students and encourage greater independent learning. The Head of Sixth Form has implemented some useful staff training for sixth form teachers and is involved in the annual review of standards and achievement in individual subjects. However, she is not fully involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations leading to targeted support or ensuring that there is a consistent approach by staff in the use of information on students or to the quality of advice or support offered to students.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing in ICT and the school has been implementing a rigorous intervention programme with support from the Local Authority. In addition there have been changes in the curriculum and improvements to the ICT infrastructure. The department has in place regular focused staff development and monitoring of teaching and learning by the school and the local authority consultants judge that teaching is now at least satisfactory with some good practice. However some students still express concerns about the quality of teaching. Evidence, from the school's own monitoring of performance, suggest that standards are set to rise although the legacy of poor teaching, assessment and infrastructure means that standards in ICT remain below that of other subjects.

There has been a strong focus on improving teachers' use of data in order to better meet students' individual needs, monitor their progress and successfully engage students in understanding how to improve their performance. There are examples of very good practice in the school and staff are beginning to usefully share this amongst themselves both formally and informally. As yet there is not a formal system in place to evaluate the success of the initiative or for identifying where targeted support and training might be needed.

There has been a careful mapping of the required aspects of citizenship and PSHE to ensure that they are embedded in the curriculum and agreements have been made with heads of faculty regarding their responsibilities for delivery and assessment. However, the school needs to ensure that the implementation of these agreements are more closely monitored and evaluated. The school is currently planning revised delivery of citizenship and PSHE from September.

The school has worked successfully to improve the standards of behaviour since the last inspection. Following the inspection, staff and students reviewed the behaviour, rewards and sanction policy and the revised policy, The Fullbrook Way, was implemented at the beginning of the school year. Electronic monitoring has enabled the school to rigorously track and evaluate the use and effectiveness of the changes. In conjunction with recent curriculum changes, particularly at Key Stage 4, the consistent implementation of the policy has led to a significant improvement in behaviour.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have set out a clear direction for the school's development and the initiatives undertaken since the last inspection that are showing an impact on students' learning and achievement. The school has successfully engaged local authority advisers as a means strengthening the school's improvement. On-going monitoring and analysis of the impact of actions is now a priority in order that the school can ensure even more rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Maria Dawes
Her Majesty's Inspector