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21 May 2008

Mrs J Brown
The Principal
New College Leicester
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Dear Mrs Brown

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Marian Harker HMI and I inspected your school on 7 May 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions, and for the information which you provided before and during our visit. While standards remain below national averages, better teaching is leading to improved standards and achievement.

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 2 and 3 May 2007, the school was asked to: accelerate the relentless drive to raise standards and improve achievement by increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching; ensure that students of all ages develop the essential personal and academic skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being; and, strengthen the weaker aspects of the curriculum, including the sixth form and provision for citizenship, careers education and PSHE.

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.

The school has worked hard to accelerate the relentless drive to raise standards and improve achievement by increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Teaching has improved through effective team teaching and teachers role modelling good practice. As a result, standards of attainment are slowly improving and achievement is accelerating across the school. Tracking of students' progress is now much better understood by all staff. Students as well as teachers are proud of their school and much more focused on raising standards. Comprehensive data analysis

indicates that there will be a significant improvement in standards in the 2008 national tests, exceeding floor targets for the first time in the school's history.

In their efforts to ensure that students develop the essential personal and academic skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being, the school has more rigorous systems in place to support individual students at risk of underachieving. Attendance has improved and is above local authority targets and persistent absentees have reduced from 103 to 32 students. There are a lot more opportunities for students to take on roles and responsibilities in the school, such as mentoring younger students and raising money for local and national charities. A good example is the 'veg shop', where older students prepare organic vegetable boxes to sell to local residents. This mini enterprise is a non profit making activity and develops students' personal and financial skills. Across the school, students of all ages report they feel more valued and respected. Some of the younger students even help with staff appointments and, as the principal commented, are 'never wrong'.

Aspects of the curriculum, including the curriculum on offer in the sixth form, provision for citizenship, careers education and PSCE (Personal, Social, Citizenship and Health Education) have improved. There are now many more appropriate courses available that meet the needs of the wide range of ability through a consortium of local schools. Of note is the high quality provision for NVQ level 2 hair and beauty therapy course available at Key Stage 4 and post 16. Students are now much better prepared for their future economic well-being through good work placements in Key Stage 4 and a stronger focus on developing students' financial awareness. Students report that they enjoy PSCE, which is now a regular feature of the curriculum provision at all key stages.

External support by the local authority and other consultants has been effective in supporting the school through a difficult period. There is a greater sense of consistency, rigour and ambition. The determination of the principal has established strong leadership at all levels. The school is now well placed to make continued improvements.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Clive Kempton'.

Clive Kempton
Her Majesty's Inspector