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Ms Debbie Clinton
Headteacher
Nunthorpe School
Guisborough Road
Nunthorpe
Middlesbrough
TS7 0LA

Dear Ms Clinton

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 04 June 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during 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 30 January 2008, the school was asked to raise standards at Year 9, particularly in English, improve the quality and consistency of marking and homework, and evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the planning process in relation to improving outcomes for students.

Since the inspection Nunthorpe has become a foundation school and opened a sixth form in collaboration with two local secondary schools. The governing body and the senior leadership team have been re-structured, and a new deputy headteacher and head of English have been appointed.

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 pupils' achievement. The school has made the areas for improvement the main priority since the previous inspection and they are being rapidly addressed. Standards at Year 9 are higher and the quality and consistency of marking and homework has improved. School planning is more effective and sharper self-evaluation is improving achievement.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are rising. Standard Assessment Test (SAT) results at L5+ improved in 2008 with a further rise in 2009 predicted according to school data. Challenging targets have been met for the first time this year. Pupils are achieving more highly in English as a result of improvements in the quality of subject leadership, teaching and learning. The school's own analysis of data is more rigorous and demonstrates improvement in standards in the last year. It recognises more can be done and is closely monitoring performance of the core subjects at Key Stage 3.

The quality and consistency of marking and homework are improving. More rigorous self-evaluation by subject leaders, for example through scrutiny of work, has improved the quality of marking and feedback to pupils on how to improve. There is more to be done and the school is taking the right action to ensure the quality of marking is consistently good across all subjects. A new homework policy introduced in September 2008 is making a good impact. Open access to information about homework on the website is helping pupils, parents and staff to know what is expected and make sure it is completed.

School plans are more effectively focussed on student outcomes such as achievement and standards. Senior managers are not complacent and aim to make it a much better school in the shortest possible time. Staff and governors are fully involved in planning and setting priorities. The re-structuring of the governing body in the last year has resulted in a sharper focus on achievement and well-being. It has improved the capacity of governors to act as critical friends to senior and middle leaders. Changes in the senior leadership team have resulted in more targeted planning which is better matched to progress and achievement. Subject leaders are held to account through more rigorous self-evaluation and challenge by line managers. Training for staff on data management has led to more effective monitoring of individual students' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector