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Mrs Anne Lakey  
Headteacher  
Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise  
Bracken Court  
Ushaw Moor  
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Dear Mrs Lakey

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 February 2010 and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 03 and 04 March 2008, the school was asked to increase the proportion of good or better teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, use information about students' attainment and achievement more effectively, strengthen the quality of middle managers in raising standards and improving progress, and ensure greater consistency and precision in the feedback students receive to improve their learning. Since the inspection seven new governors and two new subject leaders have been appointed.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The proportion of good and better teaching has improved and the quality of teaching is significantly better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Attainment is rising and students are achieving more highly in English and mathematics, many from low starting points. GCSE results in 2009 met challenging targets and school data indicates they will be exceeded in 2010. For example, 52% of the current Year 11 students have already gained GCSE A\* to C grade results in English through early entry.

Information about attainment and achievement is used more effectively to plan the next steps for learning. Students' performance is rigorously analysed with greater frequency. For example, senior leaders meet every week with subject leaders in

English and mathematics to review individuals' progress. Underachievement is quickly identified and swift action taken to remove any barriers to learning.

More consistent feedback is provided for students to help improve their learning. The accuracy and precision of the feedback is sharper as a result of the better flow and use of assessment information by all staff. Students receive individual points for improvement through written advice in books, verbal feedback in lessons and frequent reports from data analysis.

The quality of middle management has been strengthened. Subject leaders are raising standards and improving progress through more effective tracking and careful targeting of support. Senior leaders are working successfully with governors to hold middle managers and subject teachers to account. Capacity to sustain the school's improvement is significantly better and the local authority has made a good impact in helping drive the school's improvement. Senior leaders and the School Improvement Partner work closely together to make sure the school is moving in the right direction at a good pace.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock  
Her Majesty's Inspector