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Mr Ken Gibson
Jarrow School
Field Terrace
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Dear Mr Gibson

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 May 2010 and for the information which you provided during my visit.

As a result of the inspection on 7–8 October 2009, the school was asked to secure better progress for students at Key Stage 3, develop their basic skills, raise the quality of teaching, increase the influence of leaders in driving improvement, implement national guidance on the promotion of community cohesion, and reduce the high levels of persistent absence. Since the inspection, the school has moved to a new building and become part of a National Challenge Trust (NCT) with Harton Technology College. The headteacher has left and a new leadership structure has been established. The headteacher of Harton is executive headteacher and there is a new governing body, chair of the governing body and head of school. A new head of mathematics and assistant heads of English and mathematics 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 students' achievement.

The progress of students at Key Stage 3 is improving. They are achieving more highly, many from low starting points. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that the students are on track to achieve the targets for English and mathematics set out in the action plan. Achievement is rising at Key Stage 4. Thirty three per cent of students have already gained A* to C grades in English and mathematics through early entry and appropriate intervention strategies are in place for them to make further gains. The school recognises there is still some way to go in developing students' basic skills, particularly in literacy and speaking. Plans are starting to make an impact on literacy and numeracy, for example, students at Key Stage 3 are making better progress as a result of individual tuition.



The proportion of good teaching has increased and students' individual needs are more effectively met. Lesson monitoring is rigorous and involves staff from the lead partner school to moderate judgements. A common format for lesson planning is used which takes into account students' starting points and potential. Good practice is systematically developed and shared, for example, through a teaching and learning working group which has the development of literacy and numeracy as a central priority.

The influence of leaders in driving improvement has increased. Staff and governors are fully involved in planning and setting priorities which are better aligned to raising achievement. Senior leaders are holding middle leaders and classroom teachers closely to account. Subject leaders are improving progress through more effective tracking and accurate self-evaluation. Analysis of data on the school's performance is being well used to prioritise actions, tackle weaknesses and adjust planning for improvement.

National guidance on the promotion of community cohesion has been used to revise and develop the policy and plan which is now in place. Specialist engineering college status is helping to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. It has provided good quality resources and links with other schools and local industries are effective. The high level of persistent absence has significantly reduced and the school is taking the right action to make further improvements. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen from 171 to 2 in the last nine months.

The amendments required to the local authority's statement of action when National Challenge Trust status was confirmed have been made in the school improvement plan and it is fit for purpose. The support provided by the local authority, the national challenge adviser and Harton Technology College has made a good impact and significantly helped the capacity of the school to sustain improvement.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock
Her Majesty's Inspector