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Mr B Curley
Executive Headteacher
Trinity School
Condercum Road
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE4 8XJ

Dear Mr Curley

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Trinity School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 9 November 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the students who gave up their time to speak to me and share their views of the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has been reorganised down from three sites to two with Kenton Lodge closing. Deneview in Gosforth was substantially refurbished and provides for Key Stage 2, and Years 7 and 8. A new school was built at the Oakfield site on Condercum Road which provides for Years 9, 10 and 11. The change necessitated the movement of staff and students and some restructuring of the school's leadership and management team. The executive headteacher was appointed in January 2011.

As a result of the inspection on 3 March 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

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 very large majority of students achieve well because they come to school regularly, enjoy learning and benefit from effective teaching, care, support and guidance. The achievement of a very small minority of persistent absentees is inadequate. However, most students are making improved progress and, although attainment is low, it is on an upward trend. There has been a significant increase in the rate of progress over two years and, by the end of Year 11; the number of GCSE or equivalent qualifications gained has increased significantly since 2008. This trend is seen in the number of students leaving with one or more GCSE qualifications and also those leaving with five or more. Students achieve well on a range of accredited vocational courses provided in school and through its partners. On both sites, students behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. While all students have statements of special educational needs because of behavioural, emotional and social

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difficulties, they are calm, polite to each other and adhere to the positive values and high expectations exerted by staff. Students enjoy lessons, engage well in learning and make much effort with their work. They are well informed by teachers' assessments and know their targets. Students speak knowledgeably about the levels they are working at and what they still have to achieve. Teachers' planning and marking are detailed, taking account of each student's attainment and their targets. Objectives for lessons are clearly explained as are expected outcomes which act as positive incentives for students to learn.

The school actively encourages 100% attendance using incentives, which are having a positive impact on the very large majority of students. The collection and analysis of data are rigorous giving leaders a detailed insight into individuals and groups who do not attend and the impact of the school's efforts to reduce absences. In the case of persistent absence, the school has a clear strategy of systematically analysing the reasons for not attending school and action planning to improve attendance. The actions taken are suitably varied, including gradual return to full-time education, alternative curricular provision and vocational education opportunities. Intervention by the school to improve the attendance of persistent absentees is having some impact, but attendance for this group remains below average. Excluding the persistent absence figure, the school's attendance rate is near to the average for secondary schools.

The school has developed its partnerships with several agencies to promote improved attendance such as with the Youth Service, Youth Offending Team, Connexions and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health team. Moreover, the school's and the local authority's attendance officers work closely together on individual cases of persistent absence. With some success the school and its partners engage positively with parents and carers whose children are persistently absent. The cooperation of some families has been less forthcoming, and compounded by the school's reorganisation, which has resulted in some students having to travel further and hindered progress in a few intractable cases. Beyond the efforts the school is making with its partners, there is no wider strategy in the local authority in which the school takes part to help further in tackling persistent absence.

Senior leadership's clear direction and high expectations impact positively on students' learning and progress, teaching and the curriculum. Wider leadership roles have been developed effectively, driving improvement in tracking progress, target-setting and the curriculum in particular. The school has developed a relentless focus on improving attendance. Self-evaluation is systematic and rigorous, underlining the school's increased capacity 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
Alan Lemon
Additional inspector

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Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Improve the achievement of individual students by ensuring that teachers make more effective use of students' targets when planning lessons.

- Improve the attendance of students by:
 - working more closely with outside agencies to identify the needs of students
 - improving students' attendance through engaging individual families more effectively in order to support the school
 - evaluating attendance data more rigorously to identify patterns of attendance in different key stages.