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Ms Kate O'Keefe  
The Headteacher  
St Gregory the Great VA Catholic Secondary School  
Cricket Road  
Cowley  
Oxford  
OX4 3DR

Dear Ms O'Keefe

#### OFSTED MONITORING OF GRADE 3 SCHOOLS

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 February 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also thank the governors and the pupils for their contributions.

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 February 2006, the school was asked to:

- increase the proportion of good or better teaching by improving teachers' planning and assessment to meet different needs of all learners
- improve pupils' attendance and punctuality
- ensure consistent setting and marking of homework
- improve the leadership, management and quality of teaching in mathematics
- implement quality assurance and monitoring procedures consistently across the school.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress.

The quality of teaching has improved. There is now more good teaching and little unsatisfactory teaching. This is because of closer monitoring and appropriate support when weaknesses are identified. There have also been some good appointments and less use of temporary staff. The school has

provided good training for improving teachers' use of assessment data and this has led to work being better matched to pupils' needs. The school is already reaping the benefit of these measures. In 2006, results improved at Key Stage 3, GCSE and at GCE A level. The school recognises the need to raise standards further in AS examinations. Several departments have also identified that pupils are not sufficiently engaged in some lessons.

Attendance has improved and unauthorised absences have been reduced significantly. Pupils say that the school has strengthened its procedures for ensuring good punctuality through both incentives and sanctions. These are implemented consistently by staff and the school's strategies are beginning to be effective. Progress is satisfactory but attendance remains below the national average and more work remains to be done.

The setting of homework has improved and there are now fewer complaints from parents. However, the school does not have rigorous systems to ensure that this homework is marked by all teachers and that they give constructive feedback to help pupils to improve further. Many pupils do not complete their homework diaries and this is not followed up by all staff.

Teaching in mathematics has improved and is now satisfactory overall with an increasing proportion of good teaching. The school has made some good new appointments and this augurs well for sustained improvement. The department is led well and monitoring of work in mathematics is now effective. Results are being carefully analysed to inform developments. As a result, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 5 at Key Stage 3 increased by 9 percentage points in 2006. This means that the value added by the school was good. At GCSE in 2006, results also improved and were in line with what pupils should have attained given their prior attainment.

The move to one site has led to improved communications and has enabled senior managers to focus more on school improvement issues. Analysis of performance data is very good and it is used well to inform decision making. Monitoring of teaching quality has been strengthened and has usefully been extended to involve heads of department. The able senior management team continued to develop monitoring systems well during the headteacher's sick leave. The governors provide effective support and challenge to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses. The school has a deficit budget but has agreed an appropriate recovery strategy with the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Barry Jones  
Additional Inspector