



Rt Hon Ed Balls MP
Secretary of State

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Dear Colleague

I would like to thank and congratulate you and everyone at your school for the commitment, hard work and persistence that led to the GCSE results that your pupils achieved in 2009. I am sure that you would agree that it is important to celebrate success, which is why I am writing to each National Challenge school that has either shown outstanding improvement, exceeded the programme's benchmark this year and/or no longer needs programme support due to improved results. The results for your school also show that you are amongst the top performing schools this year based on sustained improvement in 5+ A*-C GCSEs (and equivalent) including English and mathematics GCSEs.

The efforts to increase attainment at your school, reflected in the improved exam results, are something that you should be proud of and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the good progress that you have clearly made. Each member of the school workforce will have contributed to this success and I would ask that you pass on my thanks to them.

First and foremost it is the pupils who have benefited from the improvements made. They have clearly absorbed the changes, studied hard and shown determination to succeed. The results that they have achieved will hold them in good stead for the future whilst also demonstrating to younger pupils what can be achieved at your school.

The National Challenge has, of course, never been about a single year's results, or even only about meeting the 30 per cent target by 2011. It is intended to support schools in creating sustainable change, so that future generations of students benefit as much from what you are doing now as your current students.

I know that you all will be committed to meeting the challenge of building on what has been achieved to sustain and continue to improve. I am confident that your school will continue to move forward in this positive direction and I look forward to celebrating with you even greater success in this year's GCSE results.

Please pass on my congratulations and best wishes to all your pupils and staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Balls'.

Rt Hon Ed Balls MP
Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families