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Mr Joseph  
Headteacher  
Hope High School  
Tanhouse Road  
Tanhouse  
Skelmersdale  
Lancashire  
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Dear Mr Joseph

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Hope High School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 November 2011 and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Young People's Worker and to the Chair of the Governing Body for giving up their time, at short notice, to talk to me during the inspection.

The inspection took place a few days before the school was due to move into new, purpose-built accommodation. Much school equipment was packed away in preparation for the move and displays had been removed. Consequently, teachers did not have access to some of their resources and the corridors and classrooms were unusually bleak.

As a result of the inspection on 6 July 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 inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school's records of students' current academic progress indicate that in some subjects, notably in art, science and design technology, students achieve well in comparison to their starting points. School data point to satisfactory progress in mathematics but to unsatisfactory progress in English. In reading and writing, the promising progress recorded in the July 2010 inspection has not been maintained. A lack of ability in literacy is now hindering a high proportion of students' progress in other subjects. Attainment continues to vary considerably. Overall, however, it remains well below average for most students and continues to pose a barrier to students' future prospects for employment and life beyond school. The achievement of students in the majority of the lessons observed was inadequate. In only one lesson did they make satisfactory progress. The students made inadequate progress because their behaviour and attitudes to learning were unsatisfactory. This is a deterioration from the position recorded in the July 2010 inspection report.

September 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Unsatisfactory behaviour included shouting out during lessons, the use of bad language and disrespectful behaviour towards staff. Poor attitudes to learning included a failure to engage in their work even when support was offered and when work was carefully matched to their learning needs. There were several instances of students arriving late to lessons, walking out of class and going off the site. Behaviour during lunchtime, in corridors, was also unsatisfactory. Discussions with staff suggested that this was a 'bad day'. Behaviour was often better but also, occasionally, worse.

The school was asked to reduce the incidence of exclusions and this it has done successfully. Fixed-term exclusions have been reduced to single figures over a year. The school has been less successful in improving attendance. This remains unacceptably high, despite some considerable success with individual students and despite close working with local authority attendance officers. Too many students continue to be absent from lessons, missing out on learning the skills and acquiring the knowledge they need.

The aspects of teaching and assessment that required improvement and were identified by the previous inspection team have been addressed satisfactorily with support from the local authority. The development of a tracking system to record the progress of each student in each subject has been a particular success, providing staff with all the information they need to be able to target students' gaps in learning. A wide range of relevant professional development has taken place since the July 2010 inspection. Lesson planning was of variable quality. However, the best demonstrated high expectations of students' learning and outlined tasks well matched to the wide range of different abilities, as suggested in the previous inspection report.

The reason why the improvements in teaching did not translate into improved achievement for students lay with the management of students' behaviour. In the lessons observed, the unacceptable behaviour of students went largely unchallenged. More often than not, other students in the class were drawn into behaving poorly. The school has a clear system of sanctions. However, these are longer-term and are not proving sufficiently effective within the classroom, where students gave the impression they may do as they please without immediate consequences. Clear boundaries, consistently applied in each class, were not apparent. Effective teaching was made more difficult, as teachers were diverted by behaviours, such as shouting out, that were not resolved. Academic learning objectives were clear but behavioural objectives, such as those in the students' individual behaviour plans, were not referred to during lessons. There is some evidence, for example, from parents and carers, that over time, students become more settled and calm. However, evidence from the inspection suggests that students are making insufficient progress in managing their behaviour and that is resulting in reduced achievement in all subjects and aspects, including core skills, except in those few subjects that students are most keen on. As the behaviour of students and their achievement were graded as satisfactory in the July 2010 inspection, students' current behaviour and achievement represents inadequate progress in building sustained capacity to improve.

Leaders and managers have been very involved in the design and preparation for the move to the new building. Students and staff are rightly looking forward to a new start in a building designed specifically to improve the quality of provision and opportunities for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

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

Brian Padgett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2010**

- Raise the overall level of attendance to be closer to the average for this type of school by implementing, monitoring and evaluating the school's plans to increase attendance for those students who live locally.
- Reduce the number of exclusions by 20% within the academic year 2010-11.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment by:
  - raising the level of expectation for students
  - achieving a whole-school ethos to teaching and learning through well-targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice
  - ensuring that all teachers provide tasks that engage students and match their learning needs
  - developing an effective tracking system that informs progress across all subjects and signals timely intervention strategies.