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Mrs Michelle Blackman
Headteacher
North East Surrey Secondary Short Stay School
174 Molesey Road
Hersham
KT12 4QY

Dear Mrs Blackman

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of North East Surrey Secondary Short Stay School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 March 2012, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to the teachers and students whose lessons we jointly visited and who spoke to us about their work. Thank you also to the chair of the management committee who took time to speak to me.

Since the 2010 inspection there has been a restructuring of the senior team, which now comprises the headteacher and two deputy headteachers. In addition, middle leadership has been strengthened with the appointment of coordinators for information and communication technology (ICT), Key Stage 4, and disabled students and those with special educational needs. A new chair of the management committee was appointed this term. The number of students on roll has risen to 54, with a substantial increase in the proportion of students who are on part-time placements.

As a result of the inspection on 30 November–1 December 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.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The school's assessment data show that students' rate of achievement is steadily rising. A number of factors have contributed to students' better progress and improved levels of attainment. The curriculum has been revised to ensure that as

many students as possible gain externally accredited awards to give them a meaningful currency in life beyond school. The 2011 Year 11 students gained a range of accreditation, including some higher GCSE grades in English, mathematics and science, so that the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to G grades almost doubled. Encouragingly, almost all students now move into education, employment or training. Parents and carers are regularly informed about their children's progress through the publication of the newsletter and phone calls home.

The quality of teaching

The school has been successful in improving the quality of teaching. The proportion of lessons that are good has risen. Teachers' planning has improved and now incorporates more challenge and extension activities, and assessment of students' learning. This was evident in a Year 11 English lesson, where students were enthusiastically discussing Steinbeck's characterisation of various individuals in *Of Mice and Men*, in preparation for their controlled assessment later in the week. Nevertheless, in some lessons, learning intentions are not always measurable or specific enough to enable students to know if they have succeeded.

In stronger teaching a variety of learning activities enables students to be active, and where these are well matched to their skills and enthusiasm, students' progress accelerates and behaviour is good. This is now more consistent across the school. For example, in a Year 11 boys' physical education lesson on Brazilian football, students were enthusiastically engaged in improving their volley techniques.

Since the previous inspection, the school has established clear assessment systems for collecting and analysing data. As a result, students' progress is tracked more robustly and teachers are increasingly confident in using this information to plan lessons which cater for students' learning needs. Nevertheless, although students often knew their targets, they could not regularly or confidently articulate the 'next steps' to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The lessons observed during the monitoring inspection show that relationships between staff and students are positive. The school's consistent use of a points system makes a good contribution to the effective management of behaviour so that teachers are able to focus almost exclusively on their learning. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted by the high expectations of all staff as role models. This enables students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to overcome their difficulties and make significant changes in their attitudes and in their lives at home.

The imperative for students to attend regularly has been substantially strengthened by the appointment of an attendance officer. The recording and monitoring and use of attendance data are much improved and challenging targets have been set.

Senior staff acknowledge that there is still more to do in analysing data further to unpick trends for groups of students and to make a link between achievement and attendance data. Nevertheless, the rate of attendance has improved markedly in the last year.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Good inroads have been made into the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Members of the newly constructed senior team are working well together and now hold responsibilities that are common across both sites. This has led to a more cohesive and joined-up approach across both sites and, as a result, middle leaders are now more accountable for the performance of their areas of responsibility. For example, as a result of more rigorous monitoring, the quality of teaching is improving. Similarly, the school's use of data has improved markedly and is being driven by the senior team together with the Key Stage 4 programme manager. The curriculum is now better balanced to meet the needs of the students at the school.

Provision for students to prepare for life in the United Kingdom and a global society has improved. Since the previous inspection, an audit has been conducted and leaders now have a much deeper understanding of their own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures within it. For example, students entertained members of the local community by preparing and serving afternoon tea. The school's international links are expanding and promote positive awareness of global issues, for example, through fund raising to support the work of an orphanage in Mexico.

The local authority is providing good monitoring, guidance and training for the school. In addition to this it has supported new senior and middle leaders through a well-considered coaching and induction programme for their roles.

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

Yours sincerely

David Scott
Additional inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 30 November–1 December 2010

- Ensure that the two sites operate as one short-stay school by:
 - increasing the cohesiveness of the leadership and management by developing the roles of middle leaders in particular
 - strengthening whole-school monitoring
 - increasing the balance of curriculum and accreditation opportunities across both sites, including contributing more to the community and developing community cohesion.

- Improve attendance at both sites by setting more challenging targets.

- By July 2011, ensure that the quality of teaching is good overall and well supported by effective assessment procedures by:
 - accelerating the pace at which lessons proceed
 - ensuring that the learning activities are challenging and extension activities are provided for those who finish the tasks early
 - consistently tracking students' progress
 - ensuring that staff and parents and carers are fully aware of the progress being made
 - students knowing exactly what they have to do to improve their learning
 - providing a variety of activities to meet students' different learning styles.