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Ms Nicky Jennings
Headteacher
The Rose School
Greenock Street
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Lancashire
BB11 4DT

Dear Ms Jennings

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of The Rose School

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 22 September 2010, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. I would also like to thank the governors for the discussion we had, and the students I met, who were welcoming and helpful. I appreciated the opportunity to talk with other members of the leadership team and the school improvement advisor.

The school has experienced considerable changes since the inspection 18 months ago. It relocated to new accommodation under the Building Schools for the Future programme at the start of the academic year. In addition, there have been several changes in staffing.

As a result of the inspection on 03 February 2009, 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.

Leaders have successfully raised attainment and improved students' rate of progress because of improvements to the curriculum and to the quality of teaching. The amount of taught time has increased considerably. The two afternoons previously given to 'reward time' each week are now used for National Curriculum subjects. Regular 'tutor time' helps students make the transition from home to school and gives an opportunity to talk about anything which may have arisen in their turbulent lives. The curriculum is better tailored to meet the needs of individuals, so students



have a more positive attitude to school and to their work. Though it is early days, students and staff are already using the new accommodation to promote students' achievements and enjoyment. For example, the imaginatively planned grounds provide an excellent resource for outdoor activities such as mountain biking. Students report that, 'In the old school, we'd have been on top of each other and fighting, it's brill here.' Furthermore, specialist rooms for science, art, and design and technology provide far greater scope for activities. The fitness room, gymnasium, 'chill out zone' and sensory room contribute well to students' physical and emotional well-being. The growth of nationally recognised awards on offer, such as a GCSE short course in information and communication technology, adds to students' employability.

Changes in staffing and professional training have eradicated inadequate teaching. In addition, the quality of teaching is much improved with the result that students are making better progress. Leaders and the local authority have provided helpful training for staff which has been effective in their more accurate assessment of students' learning and attainment, managing behaviour and in improving their subject knowledge. Of the nine lessons or parts of lessons observed, almost all were good or outstanding. As a consequence, students are making much better progress. All those who left the school in the summer of 2010 who had spent their secondary career at The Rose School gained graded GCSE passes in English, mathematics and science.

The headteacher and deputy have worked with determination and tenacity to make the improvements. They have created an effective team of teachers and support staff. The system to track students' progress is well established, with half termly checks quickly identifying underachievement and gaps in learning. Teachers are more accurate at pinpointing students' levels of attainment. Subject managers are taking more responsibility. All have done an audit of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and have analysed assessment data. Leaders recognise, however, that the quality of this is variable. Assessment data are now used to set whole-school targets. While the statutory targets were over-ambitious for 2010, those for 2011 are more realistic. Knowing that most of the school population are in circumstances that make them extremely vulnerable, leaders have ensured that issues about safety and safeguarding are given their full attention and are integrated into the curriculum to raise students' awareness.

Despite using all the strategies at its disposal, little change has been made to the overall attendance figure. Students appreciate the range of rewards and the majority have improved their attendance. However, circumstances beyond the control of the school are having a negative effect on the figure. Until the start of the academic year, the school did not have a local authority attendance officer to work with persistent absentees. Furthermore, students who have previously been placed out of county and transferred to the school roll, but have never attended, remain there, as do students who have resided abroad for up to half a term. Though small in number,

this group has a sizeable effect on the overall attendance figure because the school has only 40 students in total.

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

Katharine Halifax
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2009

- Use a wide range of strategies to improve levels of attendance.
- Increase the amount of taught time in the school day so that the curriculum can make as full a contribution as possible to the progress pupils make.
- Make better use of information gathered from assessments of pupils' progress and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to make the targets in the school's improvement plans more specific.
- Increase the proportion of lessons judged to be good and outstanding.