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17 May 2011

Mr Gareth Dawkins  
Executive Principal  
Bradford Academy  
Teasdale Street  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD4 7QJ

Dear Mr Dawkins,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Bradford Academy**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I and Judy Jones, Additional Inspector inspected your academy on 17 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please forward our thanks to your Chair of the Governing Body and your students for their help during the inspection.

Since the last inspection, there have been no significant changes to staffing. The academy has established early years provision and construction will shortly commence on an extension to provide for early years and primary provision to enable a 3 to 18 through academy.

As a result of the inspection on 03 February 2010, the academy 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 academy has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The GCSE attainment indicator, 5A\*- C including English and mathematics in 2009/10 remained low at 25%. However, robust tracking systems indicate that there will be a significant improvement in this indicator in 2010/11. Early GCSE entry results have already exceeded the 2010 end of year pass rates for both English and mathematics. In mathematics, the percentage of students making better progress has increased from 39% to 59%. In November 2010, 28% of students achieved GCSE grades A\* to C in mathematics compared to 17% for the similar period in 2009. Senior and middle leaders recognise that the key challenge for the academy is to accelerate and sustain improvement in attainment at Key Stage 4. In particular the attainment and progress of those known to be eligible for free school meals and middle-ability girls requires significant improvement. Academy records indicate that students are making good progress at Key Stage 3. A strong focus on literacy, numeracy and oracy is positively impacting on low levels of attainment on entry.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The academy has employed an extensive range of interventions to improve historically poor attendance. These have impacted and attendance has significantly improved increasing over a period of eighteen months from 89% to just over 92%. Persistent absences have been significantly reduced. One student succinctly summarised the change, "This is a good place to be". The academy has placed a strong emphasis on the involvement of parents in successful strategies that have enabled students to re-engage in learning. Students engage very well with each other, staff and other adults; they are keen to learn and make the best use of the excellent opportunities the academy is offering them. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

During the monitoring visit inspectors undertook a number of lesson observations and short visits to lessons. The quality assurance and good practice link between English and mathematics has improved approaches to teaching and learning in the latter. In mathematics, work is now more tailored to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Marking is more focused on providing sharper feedback on tasks and in pointing the way and means for students to make further progress. The work of the specialism in citizenship and enterprise continues to make an exemplary contribution to the academy. A strong culture of sharing the best practice impacts across the entire curriculum.

Inspired leadership and effective, improvement management from the Executive Principal and his highly talented senior leadership team have engendered a comprehensive change of culture since the inception of the academy. High expectations and aspirations are embedded across senior and middle leaders as well as teaching staff. New initiatives and intervention strategies are evaluated against clearly defined measures to assess their impact, and quickly and effectively embedded into systems. Challenging targets are set and monitoring and intervention strategies are robust. Self-evaluation is critical and accurate. All this demonstrates the building of a better capacity to sustain improvement which is starting to impact on improved attainment. Governors have insightful leadership and are robust in their challenge and commitment to an accelerated and sustainable improvement agenda. The Executive Principal and senior leaders have worked closely with the School Improvement Partner to make sure the academy is moving in the right direction. In particular, they have valued the support offered by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. This monitoring visit included a check on the academy's safeguarding procedures and found them at that point to be secure and meeting requirements.

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

Mr Patrick Geraghty  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place 03 Feb 2010**

- Raise attainment overall and especially in mathematics by:
  - tailoring work more sharply to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students
  - building on existing best practice in the academy to improve the quality of feedback through marking.
  
- Raise levels of attendance particularly at Key Stage 4 by:
  - challenging the entrenched attitudes to attendance of some students
  - providing appropriate support for students and their families, and personalised courses to help students re-engage with learning.