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18 April 2013

Mr A Taylor-Edwards  
Winsford E-ACT Academy  
Grange Lane  
Winsford  
Cheshire  
CW7 2BT

Dear Mr Taylor-Edwards

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Winsford E-ACT Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 18 April, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the academy's senior leaders, staff with responsibility for subjects and the sixth form, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the sponsors and a group of pupils. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the academy's improvement plan.

#### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to the academy since the recent inspection.

#### **Main findings**

The academy's current improvement plan covers in detail all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The plan identifies specific actions to be taken together with target dates and anticipated costs. A strong feature of the plan is the inclusion of key milestones, where measurable outcomes are reviewed at

six-monthly intervals. Plans include an appropriate focus on the achievement of students who are entitled to the pupil premium.

Since the last inspection, the academy has undertaken a whole-school training day on developing students' literacy skills. As a result, more teachers are applying the academy's policy of correcting written work in a consistent way, providing feedback and targets. Some pupils recognise a greater emphasis on their writing and speaking in lessons. Further training is planned in supporting students whose reading is below age-related expectations.

Leaders appreciate the need to develop the quality of teaching further. Plans to implement a wide-ranging programme of professional development are well under way and include not simply a general programme, but one which includes a specific focus on the areas of teaching identified in the inspection as requiring improvement. The quality of marking and feedback already has a higher priority within the academy and is being checked more rigorously than before.

The academy's leaders have made several important appointments to positions of responsibility, some involving new roles for established staff and some involving newly appointed staff from outside. Several of these appointments, together with other planned posts, demonstrate an increased focus on improving students' literacy. Leaders are making increasing demands on subject leaders and others with responsibilities. Leaders have correctly identified the need to monitor the quality of teaching and students' achievement in mathematics, not least because of staff changes within the department.

Governors provide consistent challenge to senior leaders. They undertake regular training and have plans to increase their expertise in monitoring how effectively the academy's leaders use the pupil premium.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the academy, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- monitor carefully the quality of teaching in mathematics
- arrange for appropriate staff to attend a 'Better English and mathematics' conference

Ofsted will continue to monitor the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

A representative of the sponsor provides regular support to the academy. He has given advice on the academy's most recent action plan and visited the school to offer support for developing teaching. The sponsor has direct involvement in appointing the Chair of the Governing Body. Since the inspection, the sponsor has

helped the academy's leaders to procure training from providers that have a strong record of successfully improving teaching, and has facilitated links between the academy and another successful academy in the E-ACT chain.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for West Cheshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Paul Chambers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.