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7 March 2014

Ms L Johnson  
Interim Headteacher  
Luddendenfoot Academy  
Burnley Road  
Luddendenfoot  
Halifax  
West Yorkshire  
HX2 6AU

Dear Ms Johnson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Luddendenfoot Academy, Calderdale**

Following my visit to your school on 6 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 December 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Develop the checking, support and challenge provided for teachers by:
  - ensuring a sharper focus on raising teachers' expectations both of their own practice and of what pupils' can achieve
  - making sure work given to pupils is sufficiently challenging and that feedback and marking has a stronger impact on their learning and progress
  - insisting on improvement and challenging robustly when agreed approaches to teaching are not implemented consistently
  - ensuring monitoring is more evaluative and concentrates on the impact the academy is having on pupils' outcomes.

- Strengthen the academy's improvement plan by:
  - sharpening success criteria and including measurable milestones so governors, leaders and teachers have a clearer idea of what improvements are expected within clear timescales
  - including data and targets for pupils' progress and attainment
  - ensuring there is a plan for the actions of governors and that governors are included in aspects of monitoring and oversight of the current plan
  - including all areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, in particular, the timely implementation of a system to record and monitor the pupils' behaviour, including the use of derogatory language.
  
- Develop and support the governors of the academy by:
  - working with partners to increase the capacity and expertise of governors
  - ensuring that discussions and challenge for leaders focuses on the impact their actions are having.

## **Evidence**

During my visit, I held meetings with you and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the academy's improvement plans and looked at a range of evidence including the outcomes of monitoring activities, information on pupils' progress and a sample of work in pupils' books. You accompanied me on a learning walk to each classroom including observing provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **Context**

Since the inspection the deputy headteacher has left the academy and leaders have appointed an acting deputy headteacher. Another teacher has started a period of maternity leave. These vacancies are being filled by two newly qualified teachers. This means that half of the teaching staff are newly qualified teachers. Four of the seven governor positions are filled and there are currently three vacancies.

## **Main findings**

Your continued leadership as interim headteacher has ensured that you and the governors have a clear vision of what needs to improve at the academy. Leaders and governors are under no illusion about the scale of the challenge of moving the school to good. Robust action has been taken to address underperformance both in leadership and teaching but there is still further to go. Changes in staffing have necessitated some reorganisation of classes and teachers and adjustments have been made to provide more time for learning and literacy in particular. Together with a programme of interventions to support pupils, there is evidence to suggest this is beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement. However, this is at an early stage and you are clear that there is still much further to go. You have

accurately evaluated the quality of teaching and are unambiguous about the weaknesses which need to be addressed. Teachers, including the significant proportion of newly qualified teachers, have been assigned mentors who work with them on a weekly basis to develop their practice. However, the impact is not yet seen consistently in classroom practice and pupils' work. For example, the academy has introduced a new marking policy; however, this is not being used consistently in pupils' books. Pupils are not routinely responding to comments and questions written by teachers and making improvements in their work as a result.

Leaders have ensured that pupils now have clearer targets to support them in understanding what they need to work on to improve. The school has also engaged in moderation of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. This has led to more accurate information about pupils' achievement. Leaders have developed more rigour in checking that the information that teachers record about pupils' attainment is checked against the level of work in pupils' books. There is a clear programme of monitoring against the actions set out in the improvement plan. However, reports from leaders focus too heavily on what has been done rather than the difference it is making to outcomes for pupils.

Despite the considerable proportion of vacancies on the governing body, governors have worked diligently to consult parents about changes to the future status of the school. Subject to the approval of the secretary of State for Education, the governors have secured the leadership arrangements by agreeing that the academy will become part of the Brighter Futures Multi-Academy Trust. When these changes are confirmed the governors should work with the governors of the Multi-Academy Trust to increase their current capacity and ensure a smooth transition to the school's new status. A plan that shows how Governors will check the improvements in the school needs to be clearly stated and form part of the school's action plan.

Although not all of the areas identified in the inspection report are covered in the academy's improvement plans, the school has addressed many of them. For example, nearly all classes have engaged in educational visits which pupils enjoyed and respond well to. However, action to ensure that the school records and monitors pupils' behaviour has not been timely. Pupils told me that they still hear derogatory and homophobic language and that this is not recorded. Consequently, although pupils have been clearly told that this type of language is not acceptable; leaders are not able to determine the consistency or success of its efforts to address the issue.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Partnerships with the Brighter Futures Academy Trust have secured the continued support of the interim Headteacher. This has enabled the academy to have a clear sense of direction and to take action to challenge weaknesses in leadership.

Furthermore, the academy has been able to access training, support and mentoring arrangements for teachers, including newly qualified teachers, it would otherwise not have the capacity to provide. Similarly, partnerships with a local cluster of schools and the Brighter Futures Academy Trust have enabled moderation of assessment information which has led to a more accurate evaluation of pupils' progress and identification of where the school needs to focus its improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- Diocese – for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [ [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk) ] – for academies