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11 June 2014

Ms B Osborne  
Headteacher  
The Samuel Lister Academy  
Cottingley New Road  
Bingley  
West Yorkshire  
BD16 1TZ

Dear Mrs Osborne

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Samuel Lister Academy, Bradford**

Following my visit to your academy on 6 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- include measurable success criteria and milestones for each main area for improvement in plans so that the academy's progress can be judged accurately
- ensure judgements about improvements in the quality of teaching over time are based on a broad range of evidence.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative of the sponsor to discuss the

action taken since the last inspection. The academy's improvement plans were evaluated and a range of documents were scrutinised. I also toured the school with two, Year 12 students and met with a group of staff.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection three teachers have left the academy and a further two will leave at the end of the summer term. An education attendance welfare officer took up post after Easter and one teaching assistant has had a change of role to become an education support officer. Two new subject leaders will join the academy in September 2014.

## **Main findings**

You, your leadership team, governors and staff feel that the inspection findings accurately reflected the academy's current performance. You noted that the areas for improvement identified were already broadly incorporated into your existing development plans. Nevertheless, the post-inspection plan that has been drawn up to supplement the your current development plan focuses more sharply on the priorities in the section 5 inspection report and suitable actions to bring about the necessary improvement are identified. However, the academy's plans do not include enough measurable success criteria and milestones to ensure that progress towards good can be judged accurately.

Teachers are responding positively to whole-school and individual training to improve the quality of their teaching and are committed to developing their practice. Those staff who met with me clearly understood the academy's priorities and their role in improving the quality and consistency of teaching across the academy. Monitoring and evaluation by members of your senior team are being used effectively to check whether staff training is bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching. The most recent monitoring indicates that teachers' marking, the quality of their written feedback to students and the presentation of students' work are beginning to improve. However, there is a need to improve the rigour with which judgements from observations of teaching are triangulated with evidence of progress in students' work and current assessment information in order to establish an accurate view of the extent to which the quality of teaching over time is improving.

Student assessment data indicate there will be a mixed picture of improvement in the attainment and progress of students in Year 11 in 2014. Achievement is set to improve in English and the proportion of students predicted to gain 5A\*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is higher than in 2013. Improvements in GCSE mathematics are likely to be more modest and some gaps in the performance between different groups of students, although narrowing overall, are not on track to be closed quickly enough.

The focus on improving behaviour and establishing higher expectations for students' attitudes to learning are beginning to bear fruit. New staff appointments have increased the academy's capacity to help students whose attendance is a concern

through home visits and a higher level of in-school support. This is helping to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent and improve attendance overall.

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**

Effective use is being made of expertise both within and beyond the trust to support the academy's improvement. For example, your leadership team have been proactive in seeking out best practice in raising attendance in a school in another local authority and have utilised the skills of staff within the trust to help ensure the accuracy of the assessment of students' attainment. English subject expertise within the trust is providing valuable support and development for your English department. Other trust staff expertise, for example, in relation to special educational needs, has been used effectively to manage 'gaps' that have recently developed in the academy's provision.

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

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli

**Her Majesty's Inspector**