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8 October 2014

Mr Andrew Chadwick  
Acting Headteacher  
St Oswald's CofE Primary Academy  
Cross Lane  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD7 3JT

Dear Mr Chadwick

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Oswald's CofE Primary Academy, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 7 October 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 school 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 July 2014. 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.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, some middle leaders, several governors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A learning walk to classes in Years 4, 5 and 6 was conducted with the acting headteacher to look at pupils' writing books.

### **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection, the Chair of the Governing Body has resigned. Currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust is taking the role of Chair while the governing body makes an appointment.

## **Main findings**

The academy's development plan is a live document, used regularly by leaders to check that the academy is on track with planned actions. The acting headteacher has introduced an approach which ensures that leaders react rapidly to information gathered through very regular monitoring, recording evidence online and updating the plan promptly. The same approach is adopted with subject action plans where middle leaders, who are making a growing contribution to the academy's leadership, react with similar promptness to strengths and weaknesses observed. There is a very tight cycle of monitoring and evaluation, enabling leaders to have a clear view of the impact of developments and to respond promptly where additional support is required.

A more rigorous approach to securing the accuracy of assessment information has been introduced. For example, teachers handing on and receiving new classes had to agree on the levels at which pupils were working at the end of the last academic year. Opportunities for teachers to improve the precision of assessments have already begun and more are planned. There is a sharper focus on the performance of identified groups of pupils including higher attainers and those with special educational needs. Consequently, regular pupil progress meetings are now attended by staff with relevant whole-school responsibilities such as for mathematics and special educational needs.

As part of the drive to improve the progress of pupils for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding, the deployment of cover supervisors and teaching assistants has been reconsidered. These staff are now working in class with targeted pupils. They are also leading learning at times to enable teachers to focus their attention on these pupils. In addition other strategies have been introduced, such as targeted work with families.

A revised approach to handwriting has been introduced at Key Stage 2, building on the scheme used in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This has been accompanied by the introduction of fountain pens for pupils in Years 5 and 6. These have proved a big incentive for pupils, who are making a considerable effort to improve both their handwriting and the overall presentation of their work. There is a connection between this and the academy's raised expectations of older pupils. These are signalled by new distinguishing uniforms which include ties and set pupils in Years 5 and 6 apart as more mature. So far this term this is paying dividends with improvements in behaviour. In addition, a number of Year 6 pupils have been identified as digital leaders and proudly help younger pupils with aspects of computing.

A renewed drive to improve marking and feedback to pupils is underway but the impact of this is uneven. Some pupils are responding well to teachers' comments and challenges but this is not always the case. At times, pupils are not responding accurately and their mistakes are not picked up.

The governing body has undertaken a review of its operation and actions arising from this form part of the academy's development plan. Governors have decided that this year they should all be part of the committee which checks on the impact of the academy's work to move to good. They are beginning to look in more detail at the performance of groups of pupils, particularly those for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding. They are increasing their monitoring activities and now have a section on the academy's portal where they can share their findings.

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

### **External support**

The academy works closely with its local area partnership, Exceed, drawing on a range of expertise, for instance for coaching staff. Exceed also provided the review of governance and organises a school improvement partner to provide regular challenge to school leaders. The Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust is funding a Local Leader of Education to support the acting headteacher. Targeted support from advisers is planned shortly.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust, the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales, and the Director of Children's Services for Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Jane Austin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**