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4 February 2015

Mrs Clare Hatto  
Interim Principal  
Sherwood E-ACT Academy  
Wollaton Avenue  
Gedling  
Nottingham  
NG4 4HX

Dear Mrs Hatto

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Sherwood E-ACT Academy**

Following my visit to your school on 3 February 2015, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in January 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the Interim Principal, the acting Chair of the Governing Body and the Executive Principal from the Redhill Teaching Alliance. I also spoke on the phone with a representative from E-ACT. I visited a number of classrooms, spoke with students informally and looked at their work. I examined a range of documentation, including current performance management records, the single central record, your predictions of students' achievement and attendance information for the current academic year.

### **Context**

Sherwood will convert to a Redhill Academy on 1 April 2015 and then close completely in July 2016. The two Co-Principals, employed by E-ACT, have now left the school; one at the end of June and the other in September. In September 2014, Redhill Academy Trust took over the day-to-day management of the academy and provided the Interim Principal from a school in the trust. The number of students on

roll has reduced significantly to 26 in Year 10 and 88 in Year 11. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have transferred to the Carlton Academy, which is another academy sponsored by Redhill. A number of Year 10 students have also decided to transfer to other schools, including the Carlton Academy. As a result of these changes, there are greater proportions of disadvantaged students and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, compared with the previous year.

E-Act is managing the staffing restructure that has resulted from the reduction in students. Seven members of the original staff remain; four staff, including the Interim Principal have been employed from the Redhill Academy Trust and there are eight temporary teachers.

## **Main findings**

The Interim Principal has strived to bring stability to the school, during a period of turbulence. She has focused calmly on the needs of the students who remain in the school. Along with the Executive Principal and the governors, she is determined to ensure that these students achieve the best possible outcomes. Despite the large number of temporary teachers, there is a continued emphasis on improving teaching, and supporting teachers when required. All temporary staff were subject to a thorough selection process. School leaders are clear that they have the same high expectations of temporary staff as of all staff in the school. As a result, all teachers are making increasing use of information about students to help them plan appropriate activities to meet their needs. Leaders have adopted the performance management systems used by the new sponsor. Performance management of staff is increasingly robust. Their targets are personalised and leaders monitor these rigorously to inform decisions about pay progression.

In 2014, the proportion of students gaining five A\*–C grades, including English and mathematics, decreased to 40%. Nevertheless, the progress that these students made from their starting points improved in both subjects, although the progress that they made in English was low compared with national benchmarks. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and their peers, closed in both English and mathematics. Predictions for English were inaccurate last year and this resulted in support not being targeted where it was most needed. Leaders have taken steps to redress this and have employed an external moderator to mark mock GCSE English assessments and provide feedback to the subject leader. As a result, teachers have made changes to assessments in English. School leaders have employed a range of support for students who are at risk of underachieving. This includes compulsory after-school sessions and one-to-one tuition. Current predictions provided by the school, show that outcomes in English and mathematics are likely to improve in 2015. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are predicted to make less progress than they should.

School leaders have not done enough to secure good attendance for the students who remain in the school. Attendance figures, for this year are too low, particularly

in Year 10. A high proportion of students, including disadvantaged students, are absent more often than they should be. Leaders have employed an attendance manager from the Redhill Academy Trust, and used other appropriate actions to improve attendance, but the effectiveness of these actions is not evident.

Despite, reductions in staffing, school leaders have strived to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum to meet students' needs. They have secured additional funding to ensure that this provision continues into the next academic year. They have employed a careers and aspirations co-ordinator from the trust to provide students with access to appropriate careers guidance and work experience opportunities.

The number of governing body members has reduced, although the remaining members have a high degree of expertise. They are mindful of their responsibilities to ensure a high quality of education for the students who remain in the school. They look carefully at the achievement information provided by leaders and provide appropriate challenge.

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**

E-Act has appropriately reduced its support to the academy and now only provides termly progress reports. The new sponsor has provided effective support, including the services of the Interim Principal, the attendance manager and additional support and resources in a number of key subject areas. The Executive Principal for the Redhill Academy Trust is in regular contact with the Interim Principal and provides her with effective support.

I am copying this letter to the acting Chair of the Governing Body, the Chief Executive Officer for E-Act, the Executive Principal of the Redhill Academy Trust and the DfE Academies Advisers' Unit.

Yours sincerely

Julia Wright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**