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1 February 2013

Mr Simon Adams  
Principal  
Meadow Park Academy  
Norcot Road  
Reading  
RG30 6BS

Dear Simon

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Meadow Park Academy**

Following my visit with Joanna Beckford-Hall, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 30 and 31 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal and senior leaders, groups of pupils, teachers and support staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the sponsors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons and attended an assembly. The inspectors observed all of the teachers. A number of joint observations were undertaken with senior leaders as well as a learning walk around the academy.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The academy is making reasonable progress in raising standards for all pupils.

### **Context**

Meadow Park Academy is an average-sized primary academy. Around half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with a

statement of special educational needs is higher than average. A quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. The ethnic heritage of pupils is diverse. A large proportion of the teachers were new when the academy opened and many are newly qualified teachers. The Deputy Principal started in January 2013 and the Interim Principal will remain in post until the end of this first year of the academy's opening. A permanent Principal is being sought.

### **Achievement of pupils at the academy**

Pupils started in the academy with attainment that was below that expected for their age. Attainment is still low but is rising as the progress students are making is improving. There is a strong, successful focus on developing reading and writing skills. Standards in mathematics have also started to improve. Systems for tracking progress are in place and are developing well. Monitoring and support for teachers have ensured that assessment of learning is increasingly accurate. This is enabling leaders to have a clearer understanding of the impact of the teaching. There is now a greater level of precision with the tracking of pupils with special educational needs and so their needs are being met more effectively. There are some variations in progress between groups of pupils in the academy. Boys, for example, do not achieve as well as girls. The academy leaders are rightly concentrating on making sure that all pupils are making much better progress overall.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is improving significantly as teachers are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills further and are extremely well supported by academy leaders. Where teachers and support staff make good use of the development and learning opportunities provided, they are having an increasing impact on the progress of all pupils. During one literacy lesson, the teacher led pupils through a journey of discovery, developing good social skills, listening skills and recording the increasing vocabulary of 'wow' words with great effect as they explored the story of *Red Riding Hood*. The rain did not dampen their enthusiasm as pupils were highly engaged in learning in the grounds of the academy as well as in the classroom. Leadership and management of teaching and learning are strong. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths of teaching across all areas of the academy, as well as weaknesses, and have invested a great deal in developing appropriate tailored support for teachers. They are aware of the very small proportion of teaching that is not good enough and have appropriately supported and challenged this. Teaching is increasingly developing social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding of pupils. Where teachers are using strong questioning and assess the learning of individual pupils well, they are able to plan with greater precision for their needs and drive progress with greater pace.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to learning. They recognise how things have improved in the classroom and there is a strong focus on making better

progress. There is a clear learning ethos in classrooms and pupils are demanding even better behaviour from their peers, taking on a greater personal responsibility. Pupils are able to sustain positive attitudes and remain enthusiastic even on the few occasions when teaching is not good enough. The behaviour of a small number of pupils requires significant improvement but they do not have a sizeable impact on the learning of others. Attendance is improving and students understand well how to stay safe. Pupils are increasing their confidence. They are very willing to participate in lessons and are eager to make a personal contribution, feeling safe because of the strong care and support they get from their teachers and other adults. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the academy**

The senior leaders in the academy are working well to establish a new and successful academy. Leaders have a clear understanding of what is needed and have clear priorities to drive improvements. There is a strong and focused determination to ensure that teaching develops rapidly to support high levels of progress. Leaders are aware that pupils need to make up lost ground from previous years of learning and support teaching improvement very effectively. Senior leaders are coaching teachers extremely well and most teachers are developing well because of their passion, commitment and leadership support. The senior leaders have identified clear leadership potential in new staff and have taken steps to develop the academy's leadership for the future. The academy's leaders and governors recognise the progress made so far as well as the need to ensure this is sustained and built upon when a permanent Principal is appointed. Governors are very focused and determined to bring about success for pupils. They have set up a wide range of systems, and actively monitor the academy's progress with visits to see directly what is happening and to challenge leaders. Governors are aware of the need to be more systematic about monitoring the wide range of the academy's work.

### **External support**

There is strong support from the academy sponsors. This is particularly good with respect to the development of teachers. This has ensured that support staff and teachers have been able to visit other schools to see effective teaching as well as strong mentoring for newly qualified teachers.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Develop teaching by increased use of assessment information to allow more precise planning for individual learners and to track progress, particularly with respect to reading.
- Ensure the sustainability of the rapid progress made by securing long-term leadership arrangements at all levels, including increasingly systematic governance.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**