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24 October 2013

Mrs Annette Hall  
Executive Principal  
The E-ACT Leeds East Academy  
South Parkway  
Seacroft  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS14 6TY

Dear Mrs Hall

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The E-ACT Leeds East Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 23 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the academy's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to have serious weaknesses in June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive principal, the head of school, the Chair of the Local Governing Board and a representative of the sponsor. The sponsor's statement of action and the academy's action plan were evaluated. Documents provided by the academy were also reviewed.

#### **Context**

There have been a number of changes to the staff of the academy since the inspection when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. A revised senior leadership team is now in place and there have been some changes to middle leaders. There has been a significant turnover of teaching staff resulting from both departures and new staff joining the academy. The leaders of the academy have worked hard to recruit staff to key posts.

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

The academy's executive principal and head of school continue to demonstrate a clear sense of direction, as well as the drive and determination to bring about improvement. The systems and procedures they have established to monitor progress and improve the quality

of performance data are embedding. As a result, leaders and managers at all levels have more robust information about students' achievement, attendance and behaviour. The data show that attendance has improved and the academy now has clear and accurate information about students' behaviour. There is also greater consistency in behaviour management. However, the academy's results in the 2013 GCSE examinations were disappointing, notably in mathematics, and fell below floor targets; the minimum expectations set by the government. Senior leaders have undertaken a robust review to determine the reasons for the lower than expected performance, which was exacerbated by the turbulence in the academy's staffing last year.

The academy's post-inspection action plan sets out clear steps in response to all areas for improvement set out in the school's inspection report. There is evidence that the academy's leaders are using their evaluations of actions completed purposefully, to inform further actions including training. As the plan is reviewed there is scope to refine some success criteria, for example, by providing more precise outcomes. Overall, the plan is proving to be a secure basis for driving improvement. Regular reporting to the Raising Attainment Board, comprising governors and representatives of the sponsor as well as the academy's leaders, is supporting the timely implementation of the plan. The plan is underpinned by a structured monitoring programme. A good feature of this is the frequent feedback to all staff on the key outcomes of lesson observations and learning walks, to celebrate progress and promote further achievement. Senior leaders have also ensured that staff have participated in a range of professional development activities to develop teaching and learning, including the teaching of literacy across the school. They have also established key principles for lessons. The rate of improvement since the inspection has been impeded by unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances relating to staffing.

Governors have a good understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and the progress made following the inspection. They recognise that the data they are now receiving is more robust and can identify how the academy is benefitting from collaboration with Leeds West Academy. Governors are holding the academy to account effectively, through their participation in the Raising Attainment Board as well as through routine meetings. Training is scheduled for all governors as part of their pattern of meetings and individual governors access additional training as required.

The sponsor's support for the academy has improved, albeit belatedly. Part of the support is exemplified in the establishment of the Raising Attainment Board. The sponsor is providing specific financial support to enhance the leadership capacity of the academy through the recruitment of two members of staff with specific lead responsibilities. However, much of the work set out in the sponsor's statement of action, incorporating its plan, relates to checking rather than supporting or enhancing improvement. The plan has a number of weaknesses. The areas for improvement set out in the inspection report are not all included. The plan is not sufficiently clear about what the sponsor is providing and when, as descriptions are too general and timescales too broad. Hence, the plan does not provide an adequate basis for determining actions, monitoring progress or considering value for money.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The academy's action plan is fit for purpose.

The sponsor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Local Governing Board, the DfE Academies Advisers Unit and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Richardson  
**Additional Inspector**