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28 February 2014

Mrs Clare Spence  
Headteacher  
Beacon Academy  
Woodthorpe Road  
Loughborough  
LE11 2NF

Dear Mrs Spence

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Beacon Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 27 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 December 2013. 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. The academy should take further action to:

- include in the academy improvement plan clear criteria to evaluate the impact of leadership at all levels on pupils' achievement.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, three other leaders and three members of the governing body, including the Vice Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the academy sponsor. We visited almost all classes to look at the learning that was taking place. I looked at a range of documentation, including the academy's information about pupils' progress, a sample of pupils' work and the academy action plan.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders and governors are determined to secure improvements in pupils' achievement. Leaders have a clear sense of how and why pupils are making strong progress in writing. Using this evaluation, leaders are promoting suitable actions to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. Careful half-termly checks on pupils' progress are making sure that underachievement is being tackled. Leaders acknowledge that there is still quite a way to go before a significant proportion of pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics. Improvements secured so far are, in part, as a result of extensive external support, facilitated by the academy sponsor.

Although the academy improvement plan is rather long, it addresses the areas for improvement identified by the last academy inspection. Actions which relate to pupils' progress include measurable criteria. However, actions linked to bringing about improvements in the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders lack clarity. It is not obvious how the governing body or the sponsor can gauge the success of leadership in improving pupils' achievement.

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 is making good use of support from local schools to help teachers moderate their assessments of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The sponsor is providing continuing support to improve the teaching of mathematics and writing. Evaluations carried out by the sponsor help governors to hold the academy leaders to account.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children and Family Services for Leicestershire and the DfE Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**