



Department  
for Education

**Department for Education**

Eastbrook  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 8DR

[rsc.eastnelondon@education.gov.uk](mailto:rsc.eastnelondon@education.gov.uk)

Dear Mr Houchen,

One of the Secretary of State for Education's key priorities is to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils to ensure that no pupil is left behind. The East of England North East London RSC region is one of two that has been chosen to pilot an approach based on schools working together to narrow their own disadvantage gap based on an understanding of successful practice. The pilot will focus on a number of primary schools in Cambridge, and secondary schools in Essex, Southend and Thurrock and test strategies that most improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. If successful, we would cascade to schools in the region and beyond to inform their planning for future years.

We have reviewed all the data available to us and they show that The Eastwood Academy is one of the top performing in the region in terms of outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. We would be delighted therefore, if you would agree to take part in this pilot.

Your involvement would include a visit from one of our Education Advisers to help us understand the strategies and techniques you employ that result in such positive outcomes for your disadvantaged pupils. In addition to this fact finding, we would invite you to participate in the approach we are piloting: 'trio partnerships', where schools work together in groups of three on this issue. The trios will be facilitated by the Education Advisors. We anticipate that this will involve visits to each school in the trio and the sharing of good practice. All schools in trios will be invited to an event in January facilitated by the Department and another in June to present their findings and successes.

Your involvement could make a real difference to helping narrow the disadvantage gap that exists in parts of the region and hopefully provides an opportunity for your hard work and best practice to be recognised and shared regionally and nationally.

If you are interested in being part of the pilot, either by welcoming an Education Advisor visit, or as the lead school in a trio partnership, please reply to [nick.berman@education.gov.uk](mailto:nick.berman@education.gov.uk) within the next seven working days. If you have any questions, please contact Nick on 07552 691 757.

Best Wishes,

Sue Baldwin  
**Regional Schools Commissioner, East of England and North East London**