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29 January 2013

Judith Ejdowski  
Haydon Abbey School  
Weedon Road  
Aylesbury  
HP19 9NS

Dear Mrs Ejdowski

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Haydon Abbey School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took the lead inspector on a tour of the school to discuss developments in teaching and show how classroom displays are better promoting the new behaviour policy. The school development plan, the local authority's statement of action, documents about the monitoring of teaching and minutes of recent governing body meetings were evaluated.

#### **Context**

There have been no significant changes since the recent section 5 inspection which judged the school to require improvement.

## Main findings

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are responding with appropriate urgency to the priorities from the recent inspection. Senior leaders, the local authority and governors are not complacent. Leaders are providing a clear message to staff: teaching must improve quickly to remedy the legacy of underachievement and accelerate pupils' progress. Staff are working hard to address weaknesses in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Greater consistency in setting expectations and reinforcing the new behaviour code is having positive impact in classrooms. Learning is more purposeful; pupils are working well together and respecting cultural differences. Detentions are declining.

The school development plan outlines five key priorities with very clear objectives, roles and responsibilities, the necessary human and financial resources and intended impact. The list of intended impacts and timescales for monitoring are too generic and need greater specificity. Senior leaders agree, that by including more quantifiable and regular milestones, they can assess how quickly the school is improving.

Senior leaders are expecting more of team leaders. Senior leaders have raised the level of accountability for developing reading, writing and numeracy through additional plans that link directly to the school development plan. These plans describe how teachers and leaders will work together to strengthen teaching and curriculum planning. However, each plan needs tighter success criteria for checking and evaluating pupils' progress and attainment.

The governing body is increasingly aware of the strengths of the school and priorities for improvement. Governors are beginning to ask more challenging questions about pupils' achievement, the impact of Pupil Premium and hold leaders to account for improving teaching. Governors are evaluating their skills to assess what training they need to enable them ask searching questions about the performance of staff and how this links to pay award and progression. The governing body would benefit from an in-depth audit to strengthen its effectiveness.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- include tighter timescales and more precise targets for pupils' achievement in order to help senior and middle leaders assess regularly the impact of their planning
- work with the local authority to audit and review the training needs of the governing body
- ensure that the governing body uses the findings from the Ofsted survey report, *School governance: Learning from the best*, and *Pupil Premium: how schools are using the Pupil Premium finding to raise achievement for*

*disadvantaged pupils*, to increase governors' capacity to ask more searching questions of themselves and of school leaders.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority provides good support to senior leaders, brokering additional work two local outstanding primary schools. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are successfully working with advanced skills teachers and a Local Leader in Education to secure improvements in teaching. In addition the school is benefiting from being part of the Aylesbury Standards Project working with similar schools and collectively sharing expertise. The local authority's statement of action mirrors the five key priorities in the school development plan and includes details about how eight days of adviser support will be used.

There is greater capacity for the local authority, within the next 12 months, to lead work on strengthening the governance of the school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Buckinghamshire and as below.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Beckford-Hall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**