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14 February 2013

Mr Peter Brandreth  
William Byrd School  
Victoria Lane  
Hayes  
UB3 5EW

Dear Mr Brandreth

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

Following my visit to your school on 14 February 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 group of middle leaders and two consultants working with the school. The HMI conducted a telephone meeting with a senior representative from the local authority and met with four members of the Governing Body including the Chair and Vice Chair. The school's improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including minutes from governing body meetings, documents about teachers performance gathered through lesson observations, reports by consultants, action plans devised by middle leaders and examples of a new style lesson plan. The headteacher also took the HMI on a tour of the school.

#### **Context**

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

## **Main findings**

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders are responding quickly to the areas for improvement identified during the recent section 5 inspection. The action plan includes well-focused priorities and clear roles and responsibilities for all leaders. The main action plan and supporting plans for numeracy and literacy rightly emphasise the importance of securing consistently good teaching by the summer term. However, the multiple plans do not include sufficient regular measurement points to test the impact of leaders and governors' work. Plans do not include precise targets for pupils' progress and attainment; these need to be embedded within the main school development plan.

The deputy headteacher is working hard to refine how achievement data is collated and used by leaders and teachers to check pupils' progress. The range and good quality of training sessions for teachers and teaching assistants is starting to secure better planning and teaching that is meeting the needs of all pupils. A teaching and learning review has been completed and findings from the review are helping leaders to set clear improvement targets for each teacher. The new marking policy is used more consistently by staff and is starting to help pupils respond more purposefully to feedback about their work. Middle leaders are rising to the challenge of being more accountable for the quality of teaching by the colleagues they manage. Middle leaders are becoming much more confident in giving constructive feedback and guidance to help teachers improve their practice through joint observations with senior leaders. There is a supportive climate for sharing ideas about how to coach colleagues to improve their work, especially for teaching reading and writing.

The governing body is now more aware of the urgency of improvement needed and governors are fully committed to helping leaders' secure rapid improvement. The Chair and Vice Chair are communicating clear expectations that governors must be more accountable for checking how well the school is moving towards becoming a good school. Governors are observing lessons more often and learning about how teachers' performance is judged over time. Governors are starting auditing their training needs to decide which external training courses will help them to analyse data about pupils' achievement, evaluate the impact of Pupil Premium funding and develop their questioning in holding leaders to account for staff performance and promotion. The governing body has not yet devised an action plan to strengthen governance.

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:

- draw together the main priorities from several action plans and include precise targets for pupils' achievement and regular milestones so that all leaders check the impact of their work and report this to governors

- undertake a review of governance to determine training needs and devise a strategic action plan to strengthen governance
- ensure that leaders and governors use the Ofsted survey report, *School governance: Learning from the best*, and the recent 2013 report *The Pupil Premium: how schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement*, to increase the capacity of governors to evaluate the impact of their work to support improvement.

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

### **External support**

Senior leaders are drawing effectively upon the support from a Local Leader of Education and a School Improvement Partner. Both consultants are working regularly with senior leaders to develop teaching throughout the school. The Local Leader of Education is also starting to work with governors to help them analyse data about progress of different groups of pupils. The headteacher is currently brokering further partnership work with a local outstanding primary school.

The local authority supported the school through additional funding and regular support from a principal officer. The HMI discussed with the senior manager from the local authority that further support by the local authority is needed to strengthen governance and agreed that the local authority will continue meetings with the headteacher to check on progress against the school action plan.

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

Yours sincerely

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