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3 May 2013

Miss J Digweed
Headteacher
The Iver Village Junior School
High Street
Iver
Buckinghamshire
SL0 9QA

Dear Miss Digweed

Monitoring inspection of The Iver Village Junior School for schools judged as requiring improvement under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Following my visit to your school on 2 May 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.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2012.

Evidence

During the visit, I held meetings with you, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including samples of pupils' work, strategic planning, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring files and evidence of curriculum planning. We also undertook a learning walk around the school.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, two governors have resigned and one has been appointed. You are in the process of finding a replacement to fill the other vacancy. New inclusion and business managers have taken up their posts and a part-time teacher has been appointed. You have also introduced significant changes to the curriculum.

Main findings

Although you and the governors rightly recognise that there are aspects of the school that still need to be improved further, there is secure evidence that, since the recent section 5 inspection and my subsequent first monitoring inspection, you have taken effective action to address the points for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection report. Consequentially, the school is on the right track and the actions that you have taken are having a positive impact on pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the leadership of the school.

Evidence from my scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and internal and external monitoring records indicate that the quality of teaching is rapidly improving in most classes. This is having a positive impact on accelerating pupils' progress; the very large majority of pupils are making or exceeding the expected progress this year in writing and mathematics. Attainment is likely to be above the national average, with a greater proportion of pupils in Year 6 on track to attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics than in previous years. Pupils are more engaged in their learning because of the recent improvements to the planning and organisation of the curriculum and the improved use, by teachers, of pupils' assessment data to plan work. However, you recognise that there is a need for boys' progress to accelerate more as the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is too wide, especially in writing. The quality of marking is much improved because in almost all classes it is providing very clear guidance to pupils on how to improve. It is encouraging pupils to assess their own work and respond to teachers' comments, thus helping them to take responsibility for their own learning. You are taking firm action to drive improvement in the few classes where weaknesses in marking and teaching remain.

You have also made a very positive start towards developing closer links with your feeder infant school to ensure a more effective transition between Key Stages 1 and 2, for example in developing a common approach towards teaching phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to underpin the recent improvements that have been made in pupils' spelling.

In mathematics, the development of a calculation policy has had a positive impact on helping pupils across the school develop their numeracy skills progressively and systematically. However, you recognise that some teachers are not yet confident in ensuring that pupils use and apply these skills to solve a range of problems across the curriculum.

One of the most significant improvements has been the introduction of the new curriculum plans in January. The needs and interests of the pupils are at the heart of these plans. The imaginative 'wow' moments at the start of each topic, combined with exciting end points, such as class assemblies where the pupils present what they have learned, means that pupils are more enthusiastic about their learning. For example, your pupil surveys illustrate that, a year ago, only 36% of pupils enjoyed their lessons but now this proportion has increased to 79%. As a result of improved

teaching, a more motivational curriculum and a review of policies and procedures, pupils behaviour continues to improve and the behaviour issues identified at the section 5 inspection have been resolved.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance data and are using information about pupils' progress targets more incisively to hold the school to account. Changes in the committee structure and organisation of the governing body mean that they are now starting to play a more strategic role than in the past. However, you and the governors recognise that strategic planning can be further improved by providing even more precise detail regarding the criteria against which governors can measure the success of the school's actions on improving outcomes for pupils in the future.

Following my visit, I recommend that you take further action to:

- build teachers' confidence in developing pupils' skills in problem solving
- accelerate boys achievement in writing so that the gap between boys and girls attainment narrows
- ensure that future strategic planning contains more precise criteria against which improvement can be clearly measured.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide good quality support which matches the school's needs. The impact of this support is evident, for example, in the improvements in teaching, where specific training for newly qualified teachers has complemented your support of these teachers and resulted in the quality of their teaching improving throughout the year.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector