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12 September 2014

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

Dear Miss Digweed

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Iver Village Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 9 September 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 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 May 2014. 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 school should take further action to:

- review how it will develop leadership roles and responsibilities so that there is sufficient capacity to bring about and sustain improvement
- strengthen systems for checking on the quality of teaching, ensuring that they take greater account of pupils' learning over time.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you and other senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We walked around school together to see classes at work. I evaluated the school action plans and looked at other key documents.

## **Context**

There have been a number of staff changes since the inspection, including one teacher and three learning mentors who joined the school at the beginning of this term. The Vice Chair of Governors is standing in until a new Chair is elected to replace the previous Chair, who felt she could not give the time needed to the school.

## **Main findings**

You and your governors fully accept the findings of the recent inspection and the improvements needed. You recognise that the pace of improvement has not always been fast enough and the systems for monitoring the school's work have not been rigorous enough. You are all well aware of the need for brisk and sustained improvement in the quality of education by the time of the next full inspection.

The raising attainment plan (RAP) is your key working document. Rightly, it is closely linked to the priorities identified by the inspection, namely improving the quality of teaching, attendance and leadership and management and is reviewed termly. There are specific, logical actions to improve teaching and attendance and you have set clear targets to help determine how successful these actions have been at the end of this term. I suggested that developing a planner mapping activities across the term, rather than on a weekly basis, might help you and your senior leaders ensure that the plan stays on track and avoid overload points.

The school development plan covers the full school year. Fittingly, the priorities you have identified go beyond those in the RAP to take account of your analysis of data and national issues such as changes to the curriculum. However, it is not yet complete. We discussed the need to set out clearly in both plans who is responsible for leading the different aspects of work, who will monitor that things happen and who will evaluate the impact. Success criteria need to be measurable so that it is clear what the school is aiming for, with clear milestones to check progress along the way. There should be sufficient detail about the resources needed, time and money, to ensure plans are affordable.

You have redoubled your efforts to improve teaching and learning since the inspection, making good use of the support from the local authority's teaching consultant. Staff meetings have been used to agree how lessons will be structured and pupils' work marked so that everyone understands what is expected. I saw signs that staff are taking these things on board and of greater consistency during my walk around school. Individual teachers are receiving support. You know exactly where this is most needed and can point to cases where it is already having a positive impact on teaching. The school's evaluation of teaching tends, however, to

be too generous at times as it places too much emphasis on one-off lessons or brief visits to classes rather than taking account of pupils' learning over time.

The planned restructuring of the support staff team was completed last term. The new structure is better focused on supporting learning. The aptly renamed learning support assistants are being used where they are most needed and the new learning mentors have a clear brief to improve attendance and behaviour. There are plans to monitor their work more closely but it is too early to see any impact as the new team has been in place for less than a week.

You recognise the need for a leadership structure that shares the load for improving the school. Middle leaders, and the deputy, are relatively new to their roles and, in the main, fairly new to teaching. As such, they still need considerable support to take on their responsibilities and action plans currently lack detail about how they will be developed. We discussed whether this may be an appropriate time to step back and reflect whether the current structure is the right one before putting plans in place.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's position, what needs to be done and the challenges it faces. The increased level of challenge in the minutes of their latest meeting shows the positive impact of training on asking difficult questions. The new Chair of Governors has recently set up regular meetings with you to check more frequently on progress.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has refocused its support since the inspection, to try to ensure that Iver Village Junior is a good school by the end of this academic year. Its plan is clearly linked to your RAP, with the impact of the support it provides reviewed half termly and refocused as appropriate. You value the consistent, focused support from the teaching consultant and the increase in the time she will give the school from the end of this month. Links with a local outstanding school have been made, with the intention that the consultant headteacher will support the development of leadership and management roles. An experienced local authority adviser will be supporting and challenging the school from this term. It is important that both get to know the school and agree their respective roles with you quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Bradley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**