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Mrs Nicola Raher  
Acting Headteacher  
Iver Village Infant School  
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Iver  
Buckinghamshire  
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Dear Mrs Raher

### **Short inspection of Iver Village Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 March 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following a period of turbulence, including changes in leadership and governance, you have brought stability to the school. You have reshaped the school's values and introduced many positive changes. Pupils' behaviour has improved and the school's approach to mathematics has been strengthened. Leaders and governors now have a clear understanding of the school's challenging financial position. You are wisely drawing upon the support of the local authority. Together with other leaders, you are taking appropriate action to improve the quality of education at the school. The recent changes in leadership, staffing and governance have led to many parents and carers losing confidence in the school. You acknowledge this and are working with governors to strengthen communication with parents.

Children in the early years get off to a good start to their education. At the end of Reception, a higher-than-average proportion of children achieve the expected good level of development. The Reception classrooms and outdoor areas are a bustle of activity. Learning activities are well designed and capture children's interest and curiosity. As a result, children sustain their attention, and some are absorbed in their learning. Many parents express high levels of satisfaction with their children's positive start in Reception. As one parent commented, 'I could not be happier, my child particularly loves the outdoor learning activities.'

In 2018, pupils in key stage 1 achieved well and standards were at or above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In class and around the school, most pupils behave well. They enjoy coming to school. They are friendly and polite, and many are keen to talk with visitors about their learning. Although pupils enjoy coming to school, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, resulting in overall low rates of attendance.

When the school was last inspected, leaders were asked to raise achievement in writing. Following a dip in standards in 2017, writing improved and was above the national average in 2018. However, standards of writing in key stage 1 are currently not high enough and pupils are not making good progress. Inspectors also asked leaders to strengthen their improvement plans. The school's plans now set out clear priorities for improvement. Nevertheless, we agreed that these need to be refined to give greater emphasis to improving the quality of teaching and standards of writing in key stage 1. Leaders also accept that their evaluations of aspects of the school's work are not precise enough or accurate enough. While newly appointed leaders and governors are committed and working hard to make improvements, their roles are yet to be fully embedded.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all of the necessary pre-employment checks are completed for staff. Since joining the school in September 2018, you have strengthened record-keeping and other safeguarding arrangements. Entry to the school is now secure, enabling all visitors to be identified before being allowed access to the school. You know pupils and their families well and are alert to any concerns about their welfare or safety. You seek appropriate advice from external agencies and, when necessary, refer concerns about pupils to them. Appropriate and timely training ensures that staff are confident in knowing how to respond and to refer any concerns to you. Pupils who met with me said that they feel safe in school and know that it is important to speak to their teacher if they have any worries. Pupils understand that some of the school's rules and routines are there to help them keep safe. For example, pupils confidently explained the importance of their regular fire evacuation drills. Parents I spoke to at the start of the inspection were satisfied that their children feel safe in school. Staff are unanimous in their views that children are safe at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on specific aspects of the school's work, including: pupils' writing; leadership and management; pupils' attendance; and behaviour.
- In Reception, teachers plan many interesting opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills. Activities are motivating and encourage children to write. Teachers' guidance and support are effective and, as a result, children in Reception are making good progress in writing.
- The improvement made to key stage 1 pupils' writing in 2018 has not been

sustained. Fundamental weaknesses in pupils' writing, such as punctuation, grammar, spelling and handwriting, are not systematically addressed. Teachers' feedback to pupils lacks the precision needed to enable pupils to understand how to improve their writing. There are currently too few opportunities for pupils to write at length. Typically, the focus for pupils' writing shifts rapidly from one aspect to another. As a result, pupils do not build on their previous learning well enough or develop depth of learning.

- Leaders and governors, with the support of the local authority, have taken appropriate action to stabilise the school's finances. They are now keeping the school's financial position under much closer scrutiny. They have needed to make some difficult financial decisions which, at times, have been unpalatable. Wisely, they have appointed some new governors who have financial expertise and experience.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is appropriately focused on these pupils' needs. The newly appointed leader for SEND has made sure that support is targeted to match pupils' needs. Leaders are also making sure that the pupil premium grant is used appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders' evaluation of the impact of this support is at an early stage of development, due in part to recent staff changes.
- The current governing body was formed in January 2019, following the resignation of almost all the previous governors. Although committed and hard-working, governors do not have a strong enough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In addition, they do not have an incisive or accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities to enable them to hold leaders to account fully. Reassuringly, the local authority has stepped up support to enable governors to have an external view of the work of the school.
- You are taking appropriate action to improve school attendance. You are working with individual families to strengthen partnership working in order to raise attendance. However, it is too soon to see the impact of your work. Attendance has declined since last year and is well below the national average. Rates of persistent absence are also high.
- Since your arrival at the school, you have focused on improving pupils' behaviour. You have introduced changes to the way behaviour is managed and ensured that teachers' expectations are more consistent. The newly introduced values are supporting your work to strengthen behaviour and attitudes. Pupils explained how the current value of 'courage' is helping them to understand that they need to have courage to try to learn new things.
- The school's behaviour logs show that there has been a marked decline in the number of behaviour incidents since January. Pupils that I met told me that behaviour in the school is now much better. Across the school, relationships are warm and respectful. Most pupils behave sensibly and have positive attitudes to learning. Nevertheless, we agreed that some teachers in key stage 1 do not make sure that all pupils are sufficiently focused during teachers' discussions and explanations.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning improves in key stage 1, particularly in writing
- governors receive timely training so that they can more effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities and hold leaders to account
- attendance improves and rates of persistent absence reduce
- their evaluations of the school are accurate and precise, including evaluation of the impact of the school's additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Cox  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and other leaders to discuss the school's self-evaluation. I met with four members of the governing body and held a telephone discussion with the chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. Together, we visited classes in key stage 1 and the early years to look at pupils' learning. We also visited the playground during morning breaktime. I met with a group of pupils from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and spoke with pupils during our visits to classrooms. I reviewed a range of documents, policies and safeguarding information. I reviewed the school's pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and the school's attendance and behaviour records. I considered the views of parents through the 78 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. I spoke with parents at the start of the day. I took into account the responses from the 11 members of staff who completed Ofsted's confidential staff survey.