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3 April 2014

Mrs Cheryl Buckle  
Headteacher  
Diamond Learning Community  
Off Oakway  
Wellingborough  
NN8 4SD

Dear Mrs Buckle

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Diamond Learning Community**

Following my visit to your school on 2 April 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two other senior leaders, two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

The headteacher is leaving the school at the end of the Spring term 2014. The deputy headteacher will assume the role of acting headteacher. Plans for the school to become a sponsored academy are well advanced.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

School leaders are responding robustly to the judgements of the October 2013 inspection. They are taking suitable action to address the points of action identified in that report. Senior leaders know where the weaknesses are and what needs to be done to secure pupils' improved achievement across all classes. Suitable training and support are being given to improve teaching and learning. For example, staff are being supported in making better use of assessment information in order to accelerate pupils' progress. As an example of the impact of the training, senior leaders cite the improvement in pupils' understanding of phonics (letters that sounds represent) to help them become better readers and writers. Leaders have raised teachers' expectations and established a rigorous performance management system.

The local authority is brokering links with an effective school and effective school leaders. These links are helping staff to access training to help improve the quality of teaching. Leaders are benefiting from mentoring to help them improve the quality of their checks on teaching and learning. The local authority has facilitated an external review of governance which has helped to identify strengths and weaknesses clearly. An action plan addresses the recommendations made by the reviewer, including checking how well the attainment gap is closing between pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding and their classmates. Governors are committed to working with school leaders to make sure that the school improves.

The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan are reasonably aligned to make sure that actions are coordinated. Both documents fully address the areas identified in the Ofsted section 5 report; both contain clear milestones and quantified success criteria to enable all concerned to monitor progress and check the success of actions.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children, Schools and Families for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**