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Mr Thomas Rees
Simon de Senlis Primary School
Hilldrop Road
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Dear Mr Rees

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Simon de Senlis Primary School, Northamptonshire

Following my visit to your school on 30 April 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 on 20 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, a representative of the governing body and the school's improvement partner from the local authority. A telephone discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including notes of class progress meetings, progress reports, and governing body minutes and reports of visits.

Context

Since the last inspection, one teacher has left and been replaced from teaching capacity within the school; a change of role has been agreed for another teacher.

Main findings

The headteacher has tackled weaknesses in teaching with good support from the local authority and governors. This has eradicated inadequate teaching. The emphasis on improving teaching noted at the inspection has continued strongly. Peer coaching and joint planning has increased supported by good practice visits to other schools. A shared approach to 'book scrutiny' is also helping to sharpen planning to meet the different learning needs of pupils. Performance management has been strengthened. Leaders, staff and governors are clear about the range of evidence required to support pay and progression. This process is helping teachers to identify their development needs.

The headteacher has improved the tracking of pupils' progress and use of assessment information. This has been underpinned by training on the moderation of pupils' work undertaken by the local authority. Assessment data is now reliable and used increasingly to identify gaps in pupils' learning. This is leading to a range of assessment reports. The attainment and progress of cohorts, classes and different groups of pupils is not currently drawn together to inform governors' monitoring activities.

The school improvement plan has been updated to tackle the priorities from the last inspection. Actions are identified but it is not always clear how the impact will be measured linked to pupil's attainment and progress. Further refinement is required to incorporate information held separately about milestones, monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

The governing body has responded quickly to the inspection findings. A shared understanding of the governing body's monitoring role has been translated into well focused visits. This is evident in a report on the Early Years Foundation Stage. These visits and reports are strengthening the role of governors in the school's self-evaluation.

Senior leaders and governors are taking 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:

- include measureable success criteria in the improvement plan, so that progress can be effectively monitored and evaluated against the action points
- refine the improvement plan so that it incorporates how actions identified will be monitored and evaluated, and by whom, to drive improvement
- develop a performance report for governors that brings together the school's assessment information for cohorts, classes and groups of pupils.

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

External support

The local authority has provided effective support in managing teachers' performance and financial matters. Input has been particularly effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage to sharpen assessment and planning. Input to moderation including cross-school has helped to secure the reliability of assessments. The school improvement partner makes regular visits to discuss and support the school's self-evaluation. Additional support is brokered, for example, the inclusion of three teachers on the 'improving teacher programme'.

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

Yours sincerely

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Her Majesty's Inspector