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Yasmine Dhillon
Maidenhall Primary School
Newark Road
Luton
LU4 8LD

Dear Miss Dhillon

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to Maidenhall Primary School, Luton local authority.

Following my visit to your school on 17 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 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 6–7 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, three members of the governing body, the school improvement adviser and a small group of parents. The school improvement plan was evaluated. Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) visited some classrooms and looked at examples of pupils' work.

Context

The headteacher took up her post in April 2013. There has been a restructuring of senior leadership roles and the number of assistant headteachers reduced from three to two. The governing body has appointed seven new teachers who will join the school in September.

Main findings

Pupils, staff and parents have all welcomed the appointment of the new headteacher. Parents who attended a meeting shortly after she took up post describe her as 'inspirational'.

Simple but effective measures, such as rules for walking along the corridors and daily visits to classrooms by the headteacher, are improving pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. An exciting curriculum is inspiring children in Reception to make rapid progress using their early writing skills. However, senior leaders are not yet having enough impact on tackling weaknesses in teaching identified in the previous inspection. For example, much marking is still not showing pupils how to improve their work and pupils' work in science and 'creative curriculum' books show that pupils do not have good opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills. This is preventing pupils making better progress in English and mathematics.

The revised action plan includes all of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. It has strong features, such as challenging targets for improving teaching each term. There are also timetables of actions which act as helpful reminders to all staff of their role in improving the school. However, the plan provides little detail about how expertise from outside the school will help it on its journey of improvement. The plan does not identify how governors will monitor and hold the senior leaders to account for improvement. In this way it fails to show how governors are driving the necessary improvements.

The headteacher has begun conducting lesson observations and has given the leaders of English and mathematics opportunities to evaluate and support the work of other teachers. Nevertheless, feedback to teachers following lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work do not focus sufficiently on how well pupils are learning or identify clearly how teaching can improve.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- formalise partnerships with outstanding leaders and teachers that will help improve leadership and teaching throughout the school
- improve the quality of marking and its impact on pupils' progress
- record clearly how well pupils are learning new skills and knowledge when observing lessons
- identify how teaching can be improved when writing reports following work scrutiny
- show in the revised improvement plan how the governing body will monitor and gather evidence of the progress the school is making.

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

External support

The school purchases support from local authority staff. The school improvement adviser is working with the school's leaders directly and consultants are providing support. It is too early to see the impact of this support. The headteacher also attends meetings of the Central Area Partnership. There is not yet a formalised agreement about how the partnership can support the school and help it to become good.

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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector