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28 June 2013

Mrs Karen Jones
Headteacher
Someries Junior School
Wigmore Lane
Luton
LU2 8AH

Dear Mrs Jones

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Someries Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 28 June 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 in March. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, three governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the notes of visits made by governors and feedback to teachers following lesson observations. A number of lessons were visited.

Context

There have been no changes to the school's context since the previous inspection.

Main findings

School leaders are putting in place their post-inspection action plan. The plan covers appropriately all of the areas identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection. It includes suitably ambitious targets for the improvement of the quality

of teaching and the progress pupils make. There is some evidence that the actions already taken are having a positive impact. For example, some books show that pupils are responding thoughtfully to comments written by their teachers. Similarly, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school demonstrates that the higher expectation of their conduct is tackling successfully issues raised at the last inspection. However, the plan has some serious omissions. It does not always identify the individual responsible for leading each improvement activity, the financial cost of the actions or who will evaluate their impact on the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour. Occasionally, the plan does not make clear how the proposed activities will improve pupil outcomes.

Senior and middle leaders are liaising closely with the neighbouring infant school to ensure that the steps they are taking to improve pupils' handwriting and mathematics skills build closely upon what the children have already experienced. This demonstrates the renewed determination to make the transition between the schools seamless and so lead to greater progress when pupils start the school in Year 3.

Governors keep a watchful eye on the school's performance and make regular visits to gather independently evidence about teaching, learning and behaviour. Following these visits governors record appropriate notes of visit so that the whole governing body gains insight into how well the pupils are learning. Governors check closely the progress of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Senior leaders should take further action to specify in the action plan:

- who is responsible for leading each improvement activity, the financial cost of the each activity and who will evaluate the impact on the quality of teaching and learning
- the exact impact on pupils' learning of the planned activities.
- Senior leaders should also make use of Ofsted publications to support their work to improve the teaching of mathematics across the curriculum.

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

Since the inspection a local authority officer has visited the school weekly. The officer supported the writing of the improvement plan drawn up in response to the previous inspection. However, this support was not fully effective as the plan requires further revision. More beneficial has been the support for newly qualified teachers. This is helping these teachers to complete their first year in teaching

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successfully. The local authority has identified consultants who will help the school tackle the areas of teaching and learning that require improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector