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25 June 2013

Tom Parkin
Headteacher
South Molton Infants'
North Road
South Molton
Devon
EX36 3BA

Dear Mr Parkin,

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to South Moulton Infants' School

Following my visit to your school on 25 June 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 in April 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, I met you, other senior leaders, pupils, members of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. The school improvement plan was evaluated to see how this is having an impact on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils overall.

Context

You took up your post in April 2013, the week before the section 5 inspection. Plans are in place for September this year to reduce the size of the school from six classes to five.

Main findings

In the very short time you have been in post as headteacher you have wasted no time in introducing a plan to tackle the areas of weakness identified through the

recent inspection. Your self-evaluation is accurate and the revised school improvement plans clearly identify who is responsible for implementing and monitoring each action, and by when. You are rightly focusing on securing good teaching throughout the school and have begun to draw upon the skills of external partners to assist you in bring about rapid school improvements. Where weak teaching has been identified you are successfully addressing this issue.

Middle leaders speak positively about their growing knowledge and understanding of what they need to do in order to support you and bring about improvements in pupils' achievements. English and mathematics leaders say they appreciate the support and training they are now receiving which is helping them to lead their subjects with greater confidence.

As a new headteacher you have won the confidence of staff and the governing body. The governors who met with me said they now have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to provide not only support for you but appropriate challenge as well. This is because they now receive regular updates on the work of the school. Training has been provided for governors to help them better understand progress information on pupils and this is enabling them to ask more challenging questions of senior leaders. As a result, governors are gaining confidence in holding the school more effectively to account. To strengthen this process even further the governing body is about to undertake an external review of governance. This is to be carried out by the local authority.

In conclusion, senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection.

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

External support

The local authority is providing timely and effective support for the school and especially since you took up your leadership role at the beginning of this term. The local authority is also working in collaboration with other external partners to support your own professional development, to develop the skills and confidence of middle leaders and to strengthen the monitoring role of the governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector