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11 July 2013

Ms S Nicholson
The Headteacher
Seven Sisters Primary School
South Grove
London
N15 5QE

Dear Ms Nicholson

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Seven Sisters Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 10 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in October 2012. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Haringey.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2012

- Improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics through ensuring that teaching is of consistently good or better quality by:
 - matching work in lessons to individual pupils' abilities and making sure that more able pupils have work that extends them
 - varying the activities in lessons so learning is more lively and engaging for pupils
 - giving more time in lessons for pupils to take charge of their own learning
 - ensuring that the teaching of sounds and letters, and of reading, is of consistently high quality.

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure children make rapid progress through:
 - increasing the quality of activities to improve early literacy and personal and social skills
 - improving the outdoor area to provide better opportunities for children to learn through play
 - improving the use of classroom resources to stimulate children's' learning and develop their confidence as learners.

- Take the next steps in developing the school's leadership and management through:
 - using the staff appraisal system to continue improving teaching and learning
 - establishing a robust system to assess the impact of pupil premium on the achievement of those pupils eligible for it
 - developing the role of middle managers so they have greater impact on improving achievement and teaching.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 10 July 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, members of the senior leadership team, a group of newly qualified teachers and a representative of the local authority. He looked at the school's improvement planning and analysed achievement data across the school, particularly those relating to pupils in Years 2 and 6. He observed teaching in all year groups.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide effective leadership and management with a sharp focus on improving teaching. The new middle leadership teams are beginning to get to grips with how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. They have contributed significantly to the development of a new topic-based way of learning. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous.

The most important achievement of the senior leadership team has been in improving the quality of teaching across the school, so that most is now at least good. Strengths include good relationships, pupils who are eager to learn and teachers who are enthusiastic and engender a sense of enjoyment. While some teaching from teaching assistants is of high quality, in some lessons they do too little and are not sufficiently active in promoting learning. Most classrooms are bright, attractive places to learn, with displays which promote learning across a range of subjects. There is some high quality writing on display in corridors but in lessons not all pupils are holding their pencil correctly so that the overall quality of handwriting and the presentation of work are not good enough.

Because teaching is improving, pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment rising. Pupils' progress is better across the school, with particularly strong gains in Years 5 and 6. The proportion of Year 1 pupils doing well in the phonics screening test has improved, (phonics links letters to the sounds they make). Attainment in Year 2 has risen strongly in reading, writing and mathematics and is now closer to that found nationally. Those pupils currently in Year 6 have typically made the progress one would expect in 18 months within one year. Unvalidated Year 6 data indicate that attainment will rise strongly in 2013, with considerable gains at the nationally expected Level 4 but less strong performance at the higher Level 5. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage now has a much clearer focus on developing children's

learning through well-planned practical learning and play, both indoors and out. Children play and learn well together.

Governors know the school well. They hold it to account effectively. They monitor achievement and provide challenge but also provide crucial support when required.

The school is making enough progress for the likely removal of the serious weaknesses designation. I am recommending that the next inspection be a full section 5 reinspection.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The sharp focus of senior leaders on improving pupils' achievement through and determination to improve the quality of teaching.
- Robust performance management of all adults who teach pupils so that expectations are mostly high and consistent.
- Improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, resulting in children making more rapid progress.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Improvement planning is not clear enough about the amounts of progress pupils are expected to make. The plan does not always include milestones so that improvements can be tracked or reflect the full term of the plan.

External support

There has been effective and regular support and challenge from the local authority. It has brokered a partnership with a strong local school so that good practice can be shared. The school has also developed links with an outstanding primary school in Newham. It has made good use of independent consultants to provide additional expertise and an external perspective on its progress. The school has valued the support and challenge from the local authority school improvement advisor and through the monitoring work of the project board.