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17 July 2013

Laraine Hodgson
Headteacher
Longmeadow Primary School
Oaks Cross
Broadwater
Stevenage
SG2 8LT

Dear Mrs Hodgson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Longmeadow Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 July 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 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The action plan for improvement was evaluated. I undertook a tour of the school with yourself to look at marking in the pupils' books and I had a meeting with teachers who have responsibility for leading on English and mathematics. I also reviewed a range of documentation related to the monitoring of lessons and the scrutiny of teachers' planning.

Main findings

The action plan provides a good structure for school improvement. It clearly identifies who will lead each action and when each should be completed. Specific targets and timescales are set to measure improvements in the quality of teaching. Challenging targets are set to improve the pupils' progress in writing.

The senior leadership team monitors teaching and learning regularly. Discussions with yourself and other senior leaders demonstrate that the skills learnt in training are used well to improve the quality of observations in the classrooms and feedback to teachers. These lesson observations make clear reference to impact of teaching on the progress of the pupils. Records demonstrate an increase in the proportion of good teaching but some teaching still requires improvement. Subject leaders for English and mathematics have monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work in depth. They use this information effectively to identify areas to improve next. Analysis of pupils' books confirms that marking indicates clearly to pupils what they need to do next to improve. However, inconsistencies in the quality of marking still remain and not all pupils have the opportunity to respond to the teachers' detailed comments. Consequently, opportunities are missed to eliminate misconceptions and accelerate achievement.

Governors regularly review achievement data to monitor the school's performance. However, governors are yet to make effective use of school visits linked to the action plan to assess the performance of the school against the key issues raised at the last inspection.

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

- eliminate any remaining variations in the quality of teaching
- ensure that governors regularly monitor progress made on the action plan.

I will undertake a further monitoring visit to review the progress the school is making. 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

The local authority provides appropriate levels of support and guidance to staff and governors. Local authority improvement officers maintain a close overview of the school to ensure that it quickly tackles the key issues from the inspection to secure the necessary improvements in pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector