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Heather Sandy
Headteacher
Lacey Gardens Junior School
Lacey Gardens
Louth
LN11 8DH

Dear Mrs Sandy

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lacey Gardens Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 12 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 February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Short visits were made to all classrooms to observe teaching and a selection of pupils' books was analysed. A range of documents were considered relating to school improvement planning, evaluation of improvements, pupils' progress and the improvement of teaching.

Main findings

The school is improving rapidly and pupils' achievement is rising. The most recent unvalidated national data for Year 6 achievement shows a significant increase in the number of pupils gaining above average standards in English and mathematics and in the number making progress at a faster than expected rate. School records show that pupils' achievement is improving strongly in Years 3, 4 and 5 as well. All groups are improving their progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils supported by the pupil premium.

Outcomes for all pupils are better because senior leaders have maintained the rapid rate of improvement in teaching that was reported as beginning in the previous inspection. The most significant improvement has been made in relation to the recommendations of the previous inspection. As a result, teachers have much clearer information about the levels at which their pupils are working and how lessons need to be planned to help them achieve higher levels. Marking provides much more constructive guidance and pupils are given the opportunity to apply this to their work.

Pupils' attendance, which was judged to be low in the previous inspection, has improved considerably. This is because of better guidance to pupils and parents and the consistent application of imaginative rewards and sanctions, for example the school kitchen staff baking a cake for the class with the best attendance of the week.

The quality of provision is improving quickly because you introduce new methods with clear guidance to colleagues and in a way that convinces them of the benefits to pupils. As a result of your very effective leadership style, teachers are well motivated to improve their classroom practice and your sharply focused 'rapid improvement plan' is indeed bringing about improvements rapidly.

The Governing Body makes a very strong contribution to the pace of improvement. They have a well-planned and systematic approach to gathering evidence for the impact of new methods, evaluating them and discussing with school leaders how they might be further improved. A particular strength in their work is the way they ensure that new methods will have the strongest possible chance of improving pupils' outcomes, for example, they used research into the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that the school only adopted strategies that had been highly effective elsewhere.

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

Ofsted will carry out a second visit to ascertain that the rapid pace of improvement is maintained and that the school is ready for its next section 5 inspection.

External support

Local authority officers systematically review the school's progress and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. On the basis of this, they provide useful guidance and training to senior leaders and governors. You feel well supported by the local authority. You have particularly benefitted from their 'excellence in leadership' programme which enables you to receive guidance from an experienced headteacher about matters directly relevant to your own school's needs.

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

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector