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7 March 2019

Mr Jason Hunt
Headteacher
Someries Junior School
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Dear Mr Hunt

Short inspection of Someries Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff provide a happy and effective learning environment for pupils. When you started at the school you promptly identified what was needed for the school to improve. The leadership team uses a wide range of evidence to inform evaluations of the school's performance. You make effective use of external advisers, including those from the local authority, and of leaders from other local schools. As a result, leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths.

You communicate well with the neighbouring infant school, commissioning the support of its deputy headteacher to secure the leadership team's capacity to implement and sustain identified priorities. As a result of your actions, current pupils behave extremely well and are making sustained progress in their learning. Pupils aim to be 'the best versions of themselves' and are supported well by staff in achieving this goal.

Leaders and governors have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and facilitate their progress. In pupils' books and in lessons, all groups of pupils are now making similar progress. Teachers are also consistently using visual ways of representing mathematical ideas to support pupils in their learning. You are keen to develop teaching in mathematics even

further to achieve standards above national key stage 2 expectations. One of your assistant headteachers provides effective coaching for middle leaders who are responsible for leading curriculum subjects. This has developed their leadership skills. They check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and make accurate assessments of pupils' learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons and outside. They look after each other in their learning and play. Pupils typically respond quickly to adult instructions which are consistent from all members of staff. No learning time is lost as a result of poor pupil behaviour. Pupils are ambassadors of the school's values. Relationships between staff and pupils are very well developed. The need for fixed-period exclusions has reduced significantly in the last year. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with that seen nationally. Historically it had been below expectations for disadvantaged pupils but your decisive actions have helped this to improve so that all groups of pupils attend school regularly.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have created a secure culture of safeguarding that ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for at school. You provide support for pupils and families by employing a family support worker and learning mentor. They are valued and trusted by parents and pupils alike. You hold external agencies to account to ensure that referrals are followed up appropriately. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Records are well kept and safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils learn how to stay safe and about types of bullying. They say that they know they can go to any member of the school staff, as a trusted adult, if they are worried. Parents I spoke to, and the majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, expressed positive views about the care that pupils receive.

Inspection findings

- I followed three lines of enquiry to check whether the school remains good. First, I focused on how effectively leaders enable middle-attaining pupils to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2. In 2017 and 2018 pupils who had reached the expected standard at the end of Year 2 did not attain as well as other pupils nationally at the end of Year 6.
- The school improvement plan identifies improving this group's progress as a priority. You are providing staff with clear direction and guidance to improve the consistency and frequency of good teaching. This is working well, for example, in the way that staff are helping pupils to develop their use of subject-specific language in discussions about their learning. This is leading to pupils' better progress.
- Progress in reading has been particularly low in the school's published data. The curriculum now includes regular teaching of reading skills. Lessons are well structured so that middle-ability pupils can investigate texts and apply their skills

to different contexts. Pupils can talk about what they are learning and are given reading books that offer appropriate challenge to enable progress. Reading interventions are effective and appreciated by pupils and parents in helping middle-ability pupils to catch up where they have fallen behind.

- The work in pupils' books shows that most are making enough progress in writing and mathematics. Leaders have been focusing on raising pupils' attainment but have not yet found an effective way to report on their progress. This means that governors and parents do not receive information that allows them to recognise fully the progress that pupils are making or to identify if they are falling behind.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) made less progress than their peers in 2018. I wanted to check how leaders enable these pupils to make strong progress from their starting points.
- In pupils' workbooks and in their reading, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils demonstrate that they are making sufficient progress from their various starting points, especially where teaching is consistently strong. You requested and organised a pupil premium review which took place this term. The review identified the need to improve the quality of teaching further, to enable disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress consistently in all classes. The review was too recent for you to have implemented the recommended actions.
- An assistant headteacher ensures that the support for disadvantaged pupils is planned to meet their individual needs. Interventions are monitored carefully and are replaced if they are not working. The learning mentor is effective in offering emotional support that enables pupils to concentrate on their learning in school. You are keen to encourage parents to support their children's learning at home and have begun to encourage them to come into school and take part in events. Parents told me that they enjoyed these opportunities.
- My final line of enquiry was to check how well leaders enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. The school offers a rich and broad curriculum teaching all the required subjects. You have already started work to further develop the curriculum as it is a priority in your school improvement plan.
- Most subjects are planned to show how skills develop across the school. This has been facilitated by your assistant headteacher who has helped subject leaders to be accountable and develop their roles. Skills development for planning teaching in computing is not complete, nor is the training for some staff to enable them to implement the new curriculum plans.
- In many pupils' books, particularly in upper key stage 2, there is evidence of effective progress in the wider curriculum. However, I found that some teachers are not accurately following the skills progression outlined in the plans.
- Creative subjects are taught particularly well and pupils enjoy them. As a result, progress in these areas is clearly evident and many pupils are exceeding the attainment targets for their respective ages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop an effective system for reporting on pupils' progress across the school
- teachers implement curriculum plans consistently
- across the school, teaching is of a consistently good standard enabling disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to make strong progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Luton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paula Masters
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the schools internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future development and information about the progress and attainment of current pupils.

Meetings were held with you, other leaders and representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority.

I scrutinised evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. I visited classes from each year group with you or the deputy head. I evaluated examples of pupils' work and spoke with 10 pupils about their learning and well-being. I also spoke with pupils and staff informally in lessons and around school.

I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including mandatory checks made for the safer recruitment of staff. We discussed the schools records of behaviour. I held discussions with you and other staff about safeguarding and attendance.

Views of 52 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. I also took account of the views of 24 staff who completed the online surveys during the inspection.