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Mr Mark Legge
Headteacher
Lockyer's Middle School
Blandford Road
Corfe Mullen
Wimborne
BH21 3HQ

Dear Mr Legge

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lockyer's Middle School

Following my visit to your school on 28 June 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 I met you and other senior leaders, subject leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics, three members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. I also telephoned the Chair of the Governing Body who unfortunately was unable to be in school. I evaluated the school development plan which has been written in response to the areas for improvement identified during the inspection.

Context

A number of staff are due to leave the school at the end of the summer term and there have been changes to areas of responsibility for other staff.

Main findings

You have updated the way in which the school tracks the progress of pupils. This has meant you have a better understanding of how well different groups are achieving, including different classes. You compare the progress made by pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) with that of all pupils rather than those pupils who are not eligible for FSM. As a result, you are not fully aware of the gaps in performance between these groups of pupils.

Records show that pupils are making better progress from Year 5 to Year 8. However results for Key Stage 2 assessments are likely to be similar to those in 2012.

Aspects of the quality of teaching have improved. Pupils say that they get down to work quickly at the start of lessons. Work is challenging for the more able pupils in most subjects although there is some variability. For example pupils commented that work in mathematics is well matched to their levels but French tends to be less engaging and interesting.

The quality and frequency of marking has improved although inconsistencies remain. Pupils like the 'now tasks' they are set in English and science when their books are marked and these extension tasks are becoming more frequent across all subjects. Opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects have increased. Pupils say they sometimes use drama in history lessons before writing and they use graphs in geography. However teachers do not always enable pupils to develop these skills across other subjects.

You have shown determination in improving the school. You have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and the improved tracking systems mean you are able to hold staff to account for the progress made by pupils. Consequently, teachers who have previously progressed up the pay scales are being challenged and expected to deliver good lessons and to contribute to the development of teaching within the school.

School leaders have written a development plan to improve those areas identified within the inspection report. All areas are covered by appropriate actions, timescales and clear success criteria. There are also milestones to check how well things are progressing. What is not as clear is how, or by whom, the impact of the actions will be evaluated. Subject and pastoral leaders are receiving good training from a Local Leader of Education (LLE) and from local school in developing their leadership, rather than management, roles. This training focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their departments.

The governing body is taking an active part in ensuring the school makes the necessary improvements. The chairs of the main committees are members of the core group. They meet frequently and work closely with senior leaders to ensure the school is progressing in bringing about the improvements identified in the

improvement plan. Governors now have a better overview of how well different groups, including those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are progressing.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- compare the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals with those who are not eligible rather than all pupils so steps can be taken to narrow gap in performance
- use the *subject professional development materials: English* (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/subject-professional-development-materials-english>) to identify key aspects of literacy across the curriculum to use in school
- use the Ofsted report *Mathematics: made to measure* (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/mathematics-made-measure>) to identify good practice in mathematics teaching and apply in school.

In the Autumn term 2013 I will make a further visit to support staff on numeracy across the curriculum. I will also get an update from governors on how well the school is progressing. Additionally I will support the English and mathematics subject leaders in monitoring the impact of the work they have done to improve the quality of teaching any aspects of cross curricular work.

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

External support

The school has received effective support from the local authority. The attached adviser is in frequent contact and visits the school. He has facilitated support from an LLE, an advanced skills teacher and from a member of the local authority's mathematics team.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

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