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29 November 2012

Mark Walker  
Swanmead Community School  
Ditton Street  
Ilminster  
TA19 0BL

Dear Mr Walker

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Swanmead Community School**

Following my visit to your school on 29 November 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 September 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

#### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, a representative of the local authority, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. The school improvement plan was evaluated and documentation about performance management and the monitoring of teaching was discussed. Inspectors also looked at minutes of the Governing Body meetings and the Local Authority's proposal for brokered school-to-school support.

#### **Context**

There have been no significant changes to staff or the school's organisation since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher has made good use of the recommendations from the section 5 inspection to refine action planning and raise expectations of pupils' achievement. Senior leaders, governors and staff have responded positively to the inspection judgement and show determination and ambition to improve performance quickly to make the school good. Together with the Local Leader in Education and a consultant headteacher they have sharpened the school's success plan so that it focuses strongly on improving teaching and articulates the levels of attainment and rates of progress that all pupils are expected to achieve. Performance management arrangements have been overhauled so that the objectives for all staff are linked more tightly to improving the progress of all pupils, including higher ability pupils.

The governing body have received training in their role which has increased their confidence in checking on the performance of the school. Governors are currently auditing their skills and developing a training programme to support their work so that they can hold school leaders to account more effectively. School leaders have strengthened their procedures for tracking the progress that pupils make. They are currently finalising a format to summarise the attainment levels and rates of progress that different groups of pupils make as they move through the school. This will enable leaders and governors to more easily evaluate the expected impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take 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:

- broker an external review of governance and use the Ofsted survey report, *School governance: Learning from the best* to support the work of the governing body in evaluating the performance of the school and holding school leaders to account
- ensure that the summary of tracking information is used routinely to check and assess the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

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

## **External support**

The school draws effectively on the support of the Local Leader in Education (LLE) and external support from a consultant headteacher. Immediate impact can be seen in the improvement in the quality of the school's action planning. The current support plan brokered by the LLE is focused on developing the quality of teaching and articulates clearly how this will be supported through joint observation, work scrutiny, pupil interviews and bespoke training for staff over the next twelve months.

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

Yours sincerely

**Karl Sampson**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**